

Sample Social Media Policy: The Mayo Clinic

The following are social media guidelines made available to employees of the Mayo Clinic.

For Mayo Clinic Employees

The main thing Mayo employees need to remember about blogs and social networking sites is that the same basic policies apply in these spaces as in other areas of their lives. The purpose of these guidelines is to help employees understand how Mayo policies apply to these newer technologies for communication, so you can participate with confidence not only on this blog, but in other social media platforms.

1. Follow all applicable Mayo Clinic policies. For example, you must not share confidential or proprietary information about Mayo Clinic and you must maintain patient privacy. Among the policies most pertinent to this discussion are those concerning government affairs, mutual respect, political activity, Computer, E-mail & Internet Use, the Mayo Clinic Integrity Program, photography and video, release of patient information to media and patient confidentiality.

2. Write in the first person. Where your connection to Mayo Clinic is apparent, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Mayo Clinic. In those circumstances, you may want to include this disclaimer: "The views expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer." Consider adding this language in an "About me" section of your blog or social networking profile.

3. If you communicate in the public internet about Mayo Clinic or Mayo Clinic-related matters, disclose your connection with Mayo Clinic and your role at Mayo. Use good judgment and strive for accuracy in your communications; errors and omissions reflect poorly on Mayo, and may result in liability for you or Mayo Clinic.

4. Use a personal email address (not your mayo.edu address) as your primary means of identification. Just as you would not use Mayo Clinic stationery for a letter to the editor with your personal views, do not use your Mayo Clinic e-mail address for personal views.

5. If your blog, posting or other online activities are inconsistent with, or would negatively impact Mayo Clinic's reputation or brand, you should not refer to Mayo Clinic, or identify your connection to Mayo Clinic.

6. Be respectful and professional to fellow employees, business partners, competitors and patients. Avoid using unprofessional online personas.

7. Ensure that your blogging and social networking ac-

tivity does not interfere with your work commitments.

8. Ask the Department of Public Affairs (4-5005 in Rochester, 2-4222 in Arizona, 3-2299 in Florida) if you have any questions about what is appropriate to include in your blog or social networking profile. Remember that if you wouldn't want your manager or others at Mayo to see your comments, it is unwise to post them to the Internet.

Guidelines for Official Mayo Clinic Participation

- Some Mayo staff may be interested in engaging in internet conversations for work-related purposes, or may be asked by supervisors or leadership to participate, in support of Mayo Clinic's organizational objectives. Such engagement on behalf of Mayo Clinic, including establishment of official external sites representing Mayo Clinic or any Mayo organization, must be approved and coordinated through the Department of Public Affairs. Mayo Clinic's Social Media Team provides oversight and assistance to guide development of new social media platforms, sharing knowledge and instituting best practices for successful implementation.
- Use of external Web sites for work-related purposes (e.g. photo sharing through Flickr.com) must be first approved by Public Affairs in conjunction with the Office for Compliance.

Code of Ethics

As Mayo Clinic engages in conversations on the Internet, the following code of ethics applies, both in Mayo-sponsored sites and in comments on other sites.

- Mayo Clinic blog posts and comments will be accurate and factual.
- Mayo Clinic will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly.
- When corrections are made, Mayo Clinic will preserve the original post, showing by strikethrough what corrections have been made, to maintain integrity.
- Mayo Clinic will delete spam and/or comments that are off-topic.
- Mayo Clinic will reply to emails and comments when appropriate.
- Mayo Clinic will link directly to online references and original source materials.
- Mayo Clinic staff will disclose conflicts of interest and will not attempt to conceal their identity or that they work for Mayo Clinic.

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