

Legal Corner

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

As an addition to a sport association having a code of conduct, sport associations should publish guidelines for employees regarding the posting of content on the internet during and after work hours. Social media includes platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, blogs, etc. Lines between work and leisure are blurring quickly in our society and there have been some high-profile cases in which employers have been tarnished by the actions of an employee after hours on social media. Accordingly, developing a workplace policy on social media will provide guidance to employees and help sport associations to avoid embarrassment or worse. If you need convincing, consider the following:

If rules are not in place regarding social media use during work hours, productivity in the workplace may suffer. Worse, an accident could occur if a coach is paying more attention to the phone rather than the athletes.

A sport association's reputation is hard to build and easy to destroy. Employees must be made aware that what they post personally and professionally has the potential of impacting an employer's reputation and business interests quickly and could create significant liability for the association.

Sport associations and their athletes spend time and money protecting an image over social media and you do not want this image to be eroded by postings on Facebook or Instagram by employees that convey a different and negative message.

Without education, employees may post confidential or sensitive information about athletes, co-workers, or the association which could create liability for the employer.

Education is the key. Employees must be provided with a clear set of guidelines to know what they can and cannot post on social media and that they can be held responsible and disciplined, if necessary, if they breach the code of conduct set by the company.

Catherine Willson
GSNH LLP
www.gsnh.com