

# Bay Area Apartment Association

## Social Media Policy

### Purpose

The association uses the internet and social media to participate in interactive discussions, promote activities and share information with members. We know the use of social media can also pose risks to confidential and proprietary information, reputation and brand, and can also jeopardize compliance with its bylaws, values and policies.

These guidelines apply to the Board of Directors, committees, staff and volunteers of the association and third parties who participate in social media activities with or on behalf of the association. All board members, committee chairs, volunteer leaders and staff agree to adhere to these guidelines as a condition of their volunteering for the Association in any capacity or being employed by the association, respectfully.

The association actively participates in several social media platforms including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. This policy applies to all current and any potential future social media platforms and postings.

### General Guidelines

These are the official guidelines for social media. Whether you are an employee, volunteer leader, contractor, creating or contributing to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual online communities or any other type of social/media websites, these guidelines are for you. We expect anyone participating in social media on behalf of the association to understand and follow these guidelines. Note: guidelines will continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge – be sure to stay abreast of current policies.

- **Be professional.** You are perceived to be an ambassador for the association on and off the job. Even in your private communications, understand you are representative of our organization. When posting your opinion on social media sites that could possibly be interpreted as the “official position of the association” – specifically state that any personal opinions you express may not be the same as those of the association.
- **Do not share proprietary information** that could potentially violate the confidentiality of our members, staff and/or internal operations. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that antitrust, libel, copyright and data protection laws apply. Never plagiarize or violate copyright and licensure laws.
- **Do not make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the association on Social Media unless authorized.** If in doubt, avoid any contribution until you have received express permission from the association’s chief elected or chief staff person. If authorized; know that association’s official positions and when speaking about issues

relating to the association, it's important to specifically state that any personal opinions you express may not be the same as those of the association. "I can't speak for the organization, but I can give you my personal opinion."

- **No expectation of privacy.** All contents of the association's communications and resources (and communications systems) are the property of the association.
- **Be honest and transparent.** Use your real name to identify yourself when commenting about the association or its programs. Do not use your position or social media to promote personal interests or to seek gains.
- **Admit your mistakes.** If you happen to make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and quick with your correction.
- **Be credible, accurate and fair.** There can be a fine line between healthy debate and hostile reaction. Refrain from negativity when commenting about our and other associations, staff, our leaders, members, and the industry/profession in general. When disagreeing with others' opinions, be objective and respectful. Remember that once your works are online, you may not be able to rescind them.
- **Add Value.** There is an overload of information online. Contribute subjects and relevant information readers will value. Social communications should assist our members. Be thought-provoking and help build a sense of community, adding value to membership.
- **Be conversational.** Social Media is a conversation. Speak professionally and encourage comments and positive contributions. Broaden the conversation by citing other experts in your posts, blogs, or re-tweet others' comments.
- **Perception is reality.** When it comes to online networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional can get blurred. Posting about your areas of expertise builds credibility and others appreciate that information sharing.
- **Always respect the brand,** our trademark, copyright, fair use, confidentiality and financial disclosure laws. If you have any questions about these contact the association. Remember, you are personally responsible for your content.
- **Respect association commitments:** Social media activities should not interfere with regular work commitments. Association staff is expected to respect other applicable policies relating to work performance.
- **Protocol.** All staff members, board members, volunteers and committee chair who represent the association with a personal Social Media page/s (with "friends" that are members) should follow these guidelines/protocol.

## Association Page Posting Guidelines

Association Social Media platforms are maintained and provided to create a sense of community by the Staff and Board of Directors. Posts will share information, the achievements of our association, members and staff as well as other relevant community and industry information.

All comments posted to the association's business pages are subject to review and removal by the page administrator at the discretion of the association's Executive Director.

The intent of this guideline is not to censure negative or critical information from being posted, but to protect the privacy and rights of members and staff of the association. Discussing employees or members in a negative way is prohibited. Administrators for the social media pages will review all postings to ensure they do not violate the policies, ethics, laws or Social Media Guidelines.

**We reserve the right to remove the following content from our social media platforms and online community:**

- Language that the association believe can be potentially considered offensive or inappropriate. Infringements on the trademarks or copyrights of the association or other parties.
- Violates the law or encourages others to do so. This includes respecting copyright and fair use laws. If you are talking about somebody else's content, reference that work or the person, and whenever possible, include a link.
- Easily identifies members and/or staff of the association in a defamatory, abusive, or negative terms. Derogatory, vulgar or offensive comments and statements targeted at other organizations or individuals are prohibited.
- Does not show proper consideration or others' privacy.
- Disparages or harms the image or reputation of the association and/or its employees or members.
- Has no relevance to the site or a post that is being responded to.
- Is a commercial endorsement, including spam.
- Property listing information and/or agent recruitment based advertisement or promotion.
- Individual or company/franchise promotion.
- Posting is deemed inappropriate or not in keeping with the spirit of BAAA postings.

**The association's administrators may:**

- Encourage positive and productive participation and discussion comments.
- Remove comments at any time, for reasons listed in these guidelines.
  - Note: User posts will NOT be edited.
- Acknowledge criticism that is legitimate and respond respectfully.
- Reproduce postings from members in other media.
- Post pictures and videos from Association events.

## **Photo/Video Disclaimer**

We reserve the right to use photographs/videos taken at any event sponsored by the association without express written permission of those included within the photograph/video. We may use the photograph/video in publications or other media material produced, used or contracted by association including, but not limited to: social media platforms, brochures, invitations, publications, magazines, television, website, etc.

Any person that does not wish to have their photo taken or distributed must contact the association and communicate, in writing, their intentions. These requests will be accommodated; however, a photograph must be included for identification purposes (and will be held in confidence).

## **Reporting Inappropriate comments**

If you have a comment or would like to report an inappropriate comment/content for us to review, send an email to the Executive Director.

**Creating Social media pages/site using the association's logo, name or brand is expressly prohibited without written authorization from the association EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.** If you are contacted for comment about the association for publication, including social media outlets; direct the inquiry to the Executive Director or Board President.

Social Media Pages/Sites created for the express use of an association such as a committee, must be set up and managed by BAAA staff. Committee Chairs, Vice/Co Chairs, Group Leaders and/or appointed representatives that desire administrator access must get approve in advance by the association.

## **Approval Required Before Use**

If your job or position responsibilities require you to speak on behalf of the association in a social media environment, approval for all communications must be received from the Board President or Executive Director using the guidelines listed here.

## **Violations**

Board Members, Staff, Volunteer Leaders and Members that find an unauthorized page depicting, using or containing association information, name, logo, tagline, or brand should immediately report the page by emailing the Executive Director. The association will contact the third party directly to request that they cease and desist use.

## **Helpful Hints for Handling Negative Comments**

Although negative Comments can provide an opportunity to discuss and respond to issues, it is very important to promote productive responses. In general, negative comments fall in two categories:

### **Constructive Criticism:**

- Establish whether the problem or complaint is legitimate.
- Acknowledge the problem.
- Assure the commenter they have been heard.

- Keep your responses positive and respectful. Try to maintain a friendly voice of authority.

**Unwarranted attack, commonly referred to as trolling or spam:**

- In many cases, it is best to ignore the commenter. But, if a response is warranted, then politely and respectfully respond and then leave it alone.
- In response to unwarranted attacks, it is often more effective to ignore the commenter, which takes away the fuel for their fire.
- Censuring negative comments is not a good practice and will risk creating a larger backlash. However, there are instances within these guidelines which warrant removal of posts (including those that can be considered offensive, abusive, obscene or socially unacceptable).

## Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review

By signing below, I am confirming that I have receive, reviewed and understand the organizations' Social Media Guidelines. I understand the association reserves the right to change, modify, update or delete its provisions without notice.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature