

United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
Social Media and Social Networking Policy for Chambers' Staff

Social media websites (such as *FaceBook*, *Twitter*, *LinkedIn*, *YouTube*, blogs, and many others) that allow users to post personal content have become increasingly popular. **The Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees applies to all online activities, including social media.** The Court's Policy Regarding Use of Government Office Equipment also applies to social networking behavior. ***In addition to*** the overarching standards set by the Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees, the court has established the following rules governing use of social media and social networking sites by chambers staff, including interns and externs:

- 1) Use of your court email address for social networking (*e.g.*, blogs, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *LinkedIn*) is not permitted.
- 2) Do not identify yourself as a member of chambers staff or a court employee in social media. You may identify yourself by a court-related job title, *e.g.*, "law clerk," "administrative assistant," but may not identify this court or a specific judge as your employer.
- 3) While engaging in social networking, you must avoid the risk of conflict with official duties and should avoid the appearance of impropriety. This prohibits "friending" or becoming a "fan" of law firms, attorneys who practice before the court, and parties to any and all cases.
- 4) Do not discuss, post or leak confidential court information.
- 5) Do not discuss your job responsibilities for the court on the Internet.
- 6) Social networking relating to both partisan and nonpartisan political activities is prohibited. This includes posting pictures on a social networking profile that affiliate the employee with a political party or a partisan or nonpartisan political candidate, circulating online political petitions, using politically affiliated images on a social networking profile, and the like.
- 7) Maintain professionalism, honesty, and respect. Your on-line dialogue is subject to the same bounds of civility required at work. Employees must comply with laws covering libel and defamation of character. Non-court specific behavior can have ramifications on your employment status (*e.g.*, photographs in compromising or illegal situations).
- 8) Avoid negative commentary regarding the court. *Any* commentary you post that could reveal an association with the court must contain an explicit disclaimer that states: "These are my personal views and not those of my employer."
- 9) Observe security protocol. Employees must take care to avoid doing things that would compromise the security of the courthouse and personnel. To maintain security, do not post pictures of the courthouse, inside or outside; do not post pictures of court events; and do not post pictures of the court's judicial officers.

The court reserves the right to monitor its employees' use of social media by monitoring its employees' Internet activities as set forth in the Court's Policy Regarding Use of Government Office Equipment. If the court has just cause for believing that an employee has acted contrary to this Policy, the court reserves the right to visit and monitor social media sites to ensure compliance with the Court's Social Media and Social Networking Policy.

This policy is approved and administered by the judicial officers of the court. Chambers' staff members who fail to abide by the policy as set forth herein may be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of his or her appointing judicial officer.

Employee's Signature

Employee's Printed Name

Date

Signature of Judicial Officer

Date