



United States Equestrian Federation Social Media Policy for Licensed Officials

Introduction

This Social Media Policy (“Policy”) governs the publication of and commentary via social media by Licensed Officials of the United States Equestrian Federation (“USEF”) when acting as a USEF Licensed Official or can be perceived as acting as a USEF Licensed Official. For the purposes of this Policy, social media means any tool for online publication and commentary, including, but not limited to blogs, wikis, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Flickr, YouTube, and any other new media.

Social media is an effective communication tool but sometimes it can be challenging for Licensed Officials to reconcile their public and private social media activities in terms of their role as a Licensed Official. It is difficult also to differentiate between social media activities as a USEF Licensed Official and as a licensed official of another organization. Social media is designed for self-expression and encourages conversations. This Policy provides a framework for USEF Licensed Officials to engage in these activities effectively and ethically.

Statement of Policy

While serving as a USEF Licensed Official, USEF Licensed Officials are granted permission to use social media as a conduit for informing their respective breed/discipline members about actions and initiatives of USEF and work of the Board. This needs to occur in a professional and ethical manner.

Publication and commentary via social media channels carries similar obligations to other USEF publications or commentary. All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that USEF Licensed Officials follow in their face-to-face official practices. USEF Licensed Officials must comply with the USEF Code of Ethics, Safe Sport Policy, and other policies of USEF for Licensed Officials when posting on social media sites.

Licensed Officials must adhere to the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including USEF’s own trademarks, copyrights, and brands. Certain protected terminology, marks, and logos cannot be used in social media without prior written approval from the Chief Marketing and Content Officer. Examples include USEF’s marks, Olympic, Team USA, Olympic rings, and variations of these.

Following the Policy

It is best to err on the side of caution. When in doubt, do not post, comment, tweet, or engage. If you are unsure whether or not something is appropriate to post on social media, contact the USEF Licensed Officials Department before making the post live. If you, for whatever reason, take an action that is in conflict with this Policy, you may be contacted by the USEF to resolve the situation and may be asked to withdraw, correct, or revise the postings. Failure to adhere to this Policy or resolution determined by the General Counsel may result in penalties from the Hearing Committee including suspension or revocation of licensure.

Guidelines

Guidelines for functioning in an electronic world are the same as the values, ethics, and confidentiality policies USEF Licensed Officials are expected to live by every day, whether you're Tweeting, talking with other Licensed Officials, or chatting with another member at the barn or a competition. Remember, your responsibility to USEF doesn't end when you are done officiating at a Licensed Competition.

What You Should Do

- **Disclose your Affiliation:** If you talk about USEF related matters that are within your role as a USEF Licensed Official, you must disclose your affiliation with USEF. Review the Conflicts of Interest and Restrictions sections within Chapter 10 of the Rulebook. Recall the Licensed Official Code of Ethics and the prohibition on interacting with competitors. This prohibition applies to social media and the timing of communications can be interpreted incorrectly and create a dishonest perception of you or other licensed officials.
- **State that it is YOUR Opinion:** Unless authorized to speak on behalf of USEF, you must state that the views expressed are your own when discussing USEF. No one should speak on behalf of USEF without express, written permission.
- **Protect Yourself:** Be careful about what personal information you share online.
- **Act responsibly and ethically:** When participating in online communities, do not misrepresent yourself. Do not forget the USEF Code of Ethics and Licensed Official Code of Ethics.
- **Honor Our Differences:** USEF will not tolerate discrimination (including age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, disability, or marital status or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state, or local laws, regulations or ordinances).
- **You must adhere to the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including USEF's own trademarks, copyrights, and brands.** Certain protected terminology, marks, and logos cannot be used in social media without prior written approval from the Chief Marketing and Content Officer. Examples include USEF's marks, Olympic, Team USA, Olympic rings, and variations of these.

What You Should Not Do

- Do not use your personal cell phone, computer, tablet, or any other similar device for Social Media while officiating during the length of a competition.
- Actions: Actions taken by you as a USEF Licensed Official, or actions that you are aware of by virtue of being a USEF Licensed Official, should not be announced via social media.
- Discussions: Never share discussions regarding officiating or stewarding that occurred during a USEF competition, including what a particular licensed official said. Do not discuss horses, competitors, licensed officials or other matters related a competition on social media.
- Legal Information: Do not discuss anything to do with a legal issue, legal case, or attorneys without first checking with the USEF General Counsel.
- Confidential Information: Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential.

Enforcement

If the Licensed Official Department becomes aware of activity that is deemed inappropriate as outlined in the Policy above, then the related information will be forwarded to the Regulations Department. Failure to adhere to the Policy or resolution determined by the USEF may result in penalties from the Hearing Committee, including suspension of license(s).

Useful Contact Information:

USEF Chief Marketing and Content Officer – Vicki Lowell – vlowell@usef.org

USEF General Counsel – Sonja Keating – skeating@usef.org

USEF Director of Licensed Officials – Alina Brazzil – abrazzil@usef.org