

Air Force Social Media Guidelines

<https://www.publicaffairs.af.mil/Programs/Air-Force-Social-Media/fbclid/IwAR2cpRR2341hk96Zn2MHo2OVMkqWLg7j1zNAXsashg3HvExCs7zzHS4NUgQ/>



Introduction to Social Media

This guide will help you share information effectively while following Air Force instructions and protecting operational security. These simple, easy-to-follow tips will help you use social media in your professional and personal life. This guide is for informational purposes only and does not replace official Air Force policy.

People of all ages use social media daily. The annual "Where Airmen Get Information" (WAGI) report details specifically which platforms are used, but all Airmen use some form of social media. It's an efficient way to keep in touch with friends and family, and it's how many people get their entertainment, connect with people over common interests and receive news.

You are encouraged to use social media to share your experiences as an Airman. You can contact your local public affairs office to see if they can share your story, or you can publish information on your social media accounts. Whether you're sharing information with just your close friends and family or sharing it with the world in an online video or a blog, you're informing people on what it's like to be a part of the world's greatest Air Force.

Your stories might inspire someone to join the Air Force, support the Air Force, comfort a parent or spouse, and improve morale or correct inaccurate information. Air Force families may want to use social media to keep in touch with deployed Airmen, network with other military families and share stories on social media. People can feel comfortable about using social media and letting their Airmen use social media. It's one of the many tools available to communicate information, and it has a value-added capability of promoting interaction.

If you would like more information about using social media, contact the SAF/PAI Digital Media team at usaf.pentagon.saf-pa.mbx.air-force-social-media@mail.mil.

For details on the WAGI, see the [Audience Research page on the Tell the Air Force Story SharePoint](#) page. This link requires a Common Access Card.

Social Media for Leaders

Social media and social networking have evolved to become the primary communication methods used by today's Airmen, families and leaders. The dynamic nature of social media lets people interact with diverse audiences in an informal and transparent environment. It's an avenue for leaders to help shape conversations about their units and missions and connect with people on a personal level.

Commanders at major commands will use different social media strategies and social networking tools than wing-level commanders. Base public affairs representatives can create a tailored approach to balance the needs of senior leaders with the needs of key audiences.

Social media channels help bridge the information gap for people who know very little about the military in general. When using social media in an official capacity, it's important to be honest about who is posting information on behalf of senior leaders. If you're using social media to keep in touch with family and friends, it might not make sense to allow subordinates access to your personal accounts. Air Force Instruction 1-1, Air Force Standards, outlines how leaders can use social networking sites.

All leaders are reminded to maintain appropriate communication and conduct with enlisted personnel, peers, superiors and subordinates (to include civilian superiors and subordinates). If your personal social media accounts are publicly viewable, and show your Air Force affiliation, consider what your photos, videos, posts and comments say about you, your values and beliefs and the image you portray of the Air Force.

Air Force leaders can encourage their Airmen to tell their unique Air Force stories. They can also work with their local public affairs office to use social media channels to communicate with their Airmen, stakeholders, news media, families, local community and the public.

Social Media for Airmen

In general, the Air Force views social media sites positively and respects your rights as Americans to use them to express yourself. However, by the nature of your profession, you are always on the record and must represent our core values. [Air Force Instruction 1-1 Air Force Standards](#) chapter 2 includes information on how Airmen should conduct themselves on social networking websites. Here are a few things to remember when communicating online via social media as an Airman:

You are personally responsible for what you say and post on social networking services and any other medium. Consider how a post can be interpreted by the public. Be cautious about crossing the line between funny and distasteful. If you have doubts about whether you should post something, err on the side of caution. If the post in question concerns the Air Force, discuss the proposed post with your supervisor or your local public affairs office.

Maintain appropriate communication and conduct with officer and enlisted personnel, peers, superiors and subordinates (to include civilian superiors and subordinates).

Social Media for Families

As a family member, you are integral to the success of the Air Force. Without your support, Airmen wouldn't be able to accomplish the great work they do every day. The Air Force stories you share on social media help maintain the morale of Airmen and educate the public about the Air Force. You're encouraged to use social media to talk about the Air Force and keep in contact with the Airmen in your life.

However, you should use it safely and effectively. It's important for Airmen and their families to identify and safeguard critical information about military operations. Be cautious about sharing personal information or communicating with people over social media. Posting too much information could jeopardize the security of Airmen and missions. If you wouldn't want to see the information on the news, do not post it on the Web.

Social content shared by Airmen and families is a major target for those looking to gain access to sensitive information in order to impersonate, blackmail or intimidate. While there is a definite benefit to using social media, be wary of the details you provide.

- Don't post the exact whereabouts and activities of deployed Airmen.
- Be general about the dates and locations concerning an Airman's trip arrival and departure.
- Don't make your vacation dates public on social networks. Criminals may track your activities and know exactly when to break into your home while you're on vacation.
- Don't publicly post exactly how long your Airman will be gone on a trip or deployment.
- Be careful about publicly posting children's photos, names, schools, ages and schedules.
- Consider the image you portray on social media. Think before you share information that could jeopardize you and your Airman's career or reputation.
- Let children know they should seek help for cyber-bullying.

You're encouraged to use social media to engage in support networks, such as spouse's clubs, event committees, child care groups or local civic activities. These groups are not considered official Air Force social media, and you don't need permission to form a group of your own. You may want to limit the membership and visibility of the group to help protect the information exchanged. Even if the membership and visibility is limited, never discuss sensitive information online.

You may also want to follow the main Air Force social media accounts (listed on the bottom of this page), your local base's accounts or the accounts of your Airman's base for the latest information on the work your Airman does. You can help support their specific missions by sharing their social media content and experiences with your followers and friends.

Social media references

The following Department of Defense and Air Force publications contain information to consider when using social media. DOD web policies are viewable at <http://www.defense.gov/webmasters> and Air Force instructions are accessible at <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil>.

[AFI 35-101, Public Affairs Mission](#): Covers the overall Public Affairs mission and how to correctly implement it.

[AFMAN 35-101, Public Affairs Procedures](#): Provides guidance pertaining to general Public Affairs duties, responsibilities, and organization.

Guidance for Agency Use of Third-Party Websites and Applications

This [memorandum](#) requires federal agencies to take specific steps to protect individual privacy whenever they use third-party websites and applications to engage with the public.

For instructions on how to report high-profile impostor Facebook accounts, visit <https://www.facebook.com/help/174210519303259>.

