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# **Social Media Policy & Expectations**

Cara Harmon  
Vice President, Communications & Member Services  
[cara@morealtor.com](mailto:cara@morealtor.com) / x.1170

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## Introduction

Social media is a boundless tool to create positive relationships with industry professionals. Social networks are accessible by anyone from anywhere. Your posts and comments are easy for people to find – and use in ways detrimental to you and Missouri REALTORS® – if they want to. The communications team has put together these guidelines and resources to assist Missouri REALTORS® members and staff in understanding and engaging in the Associations social media efforts. If these best practices are followed, you will be able to communicate with others using social media meaningfully and effectively in a way that benefits you and Missouri REALTORS®. If you have any questions regarding these guidelines or how to apply them when participating in social media channels in a personal or professional capacity, please contact a member of the communications team.

## 1. Missouri REALTORS® Social Business Strategy

As stated in our Mission, Missouri REALTORS® advocate for real property rights, lead in professional excellence and engage all members. Missouri REALTORS®' social media strategy strives for members to become active, engaged participants and is designed for greater collaboration, providing a coordinated, purposeful, and beneficial tool for members and the organization.

The below strategic objectives create our social business strategy:

- Turn monologue into dialogue with our members and build deeper relationships.
- Reach more members with our information – when and where it is relevant to them.
- Join and influence existing conversations about Missouri REALTORS® and about issues REALTORS® care about.
- Empower members to connect with each other around common interests.
- Empower members to effectively and efficiently use Missouri REALTORS® resources to connect with consumers.
- Enable frictionless sharing of Missouri REALTORS® content so that members can keep their followers informed with very little effort.
- Leverage social media channels as another way to gather member input on Missouri REALTORS® initiatives, policy positions, products and services and make better-informed decisions within the organization.
- Coordinate with industry thought leaders and association executives from local and state associations to expand our reach and effectiveness.

## 2. Social Media Rules and Expectations

Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to your reputation, confidential and proprietary information, and can jeopardize your compliance with legal obligations. To minimize our risk and yours, we expect all users of Missouri REALTORS® social media accounts to adhere to the following expectations.

### 2.1 Respect for others:

According to [Standard of Practice 10-5](#) under Article 10 of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) Code of Ethics, “REALTORS® must not use harassing speech, hate speech, epithets, or slurs based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.” Further, NAR’s Policy Statement 29 states that, “REALTORS® shall be subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Ethics with respect to all of their activities.”

Standard of Practice 10-5 applies to REALTORS® at all times including Missouri REALTORS® social media channels and posts. Missouri REALTORS® expects all members and community members to respect our social media posts by refraining from using vulgar or inappropriate language on our accounts. We reserve the right to delete comments or posts that include vulgar language, racial slurs, drug paraphernalia, threats of violence, or anything else deemed inappropriate. Please act respectfully and professionally when participating on any of Missouri REALTORS® social media accounts.

### 2.2 Relevant content:

Missouri REALTORS® will only post or share relevant content. Anyone participating in Missouri REALTORS® social media is expected to do the same. No posting of listings is allowed. No solicitations or advertising of any products, companies, individuals except those with which Missouri REALTORS® and NAR have an agreement to do so. Do not share self-promotional material — those posts and comments will be deleted.

We do encourage those participating on Missouri REALTORS® social media accounts to share information related to the association’s mission, policy positions, advocacy efforts, events, and other association news as a means of promotion for the association and the REALTOR® profession.

### 2.3 Leaving comments:

Take the time to read all the comments in a thread before leaving your own. Respond to the ideas shared, do not attack the person who shared them. Missouri REALTORS® prohibits posting disparaging, embarrassing, or defamatory statements about the association, association staff or volunteers, the association’s mission, or the association’s advocacy efforts on any of our social media accounts or posts.

#### **2.4 Accuracy and trust:**

Missouri REALTORS® is committed to sharing information that is accurate and timely. If for some reason BRR makes a post or shares content that is inaccurate, that content will be removed, and the information updated. Anyone participating on Missouri REALTORS® social media is expected to uphold the same commitment. Do not knowingly share information that is inaccurate or that is spam. We reserve the right to delete content that is found to be inaccurate or spam.

#### **2.5 Confidential information:**

Those participating on Missouri REALTORS® social media accounts should refrain from sharing personal or confidential information as Missouri REALTORS® is not responsible for protecting confidential information shared on its accounts.

### **3. Volunteer/Leadership and Staff Rules and Expectations**

Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our reputation, confidential and proprietary information, and can jeopardize our compliance with legal obligations. To minimize our risk and ensure that our resources are being used appropriately, we expect volunteer leaders, which includes elected and appointed officers, directors, committee members, and leaders of the association and the Missouri REALTORS® Educational Foundation, as well as association staff, to adhere to the following expectations in addition to Missouri REALTORS® general social media rules and expectations.

#### **3.1 Designated spokespersons:**

Missouri REALTORS® Chief Spokespersons are the Vice President of Communications, General Counsel, Chief Executive Officer, and the current Missouri REALTORS® President. These individuals are responsible for the content on Missouri REALTORS® social media account and speak on behalf of the association. Association staff may act as a secondary spokesperson of the association when necessary. Those not designated as association spokesperson do not represent Missouri REALTORS® official positions and Missouri REALTORS® does not claim responsibility for their positions if shared on Missouri REALTORS® social media accounts.

#### **3.2 Promoting your appointment/term of service:**

Volunteer leaders are not permitted to set up social media accounts for volunteer-related purposes (ex. including your volunteer title in your name). If you disclose your affiliation as a volunteer of Missouri REALTORS® you must also state that your views do not represent those of the organization, you are volunteering with. All titles shared on social media must include the years of service (i.e., 2023 Advocacy Committee Member or 2023 Missouri REALTORS® President, etc.)

### **3.3 Professional behavior:**

Volunteer leaders and association staff, as a reflection of the association, may not post or share disparaging content about the association; Missouri REALTORS® staff, volunteers, or members; or affiliates on their personal social media accounts or the association's social media accounts. Respect for the law, including antitrust and intellectual property law, is required. When posting personally, include a disclaimer that the views expressed are personal and not the views of the association.

Missouri REALTORS® officers and spokespersons shall always conduct themselves as professional representatives of the organization and should understand that their personal online activity and commentary can be construed as speaking for the organization, due to the nature of their positions. Accordingly, extra care must be taken. Content and tenor of online activity should model the same decorum displayed during official Association appearances, meetings, or events.

***Volunteer leaders and staff are encouraged to share association posts and news on their own social media accounts.***

### **3.4 Confidential information:**

Missouri REALTORS® staff, board members, and association volunteers are not allowed to share confidential, sensitive, financial, or proprietary information of the association as this information is not intended for public distribution.

## **4. Blog Guidelines**

### **4.1 Creating a new blog for Missouri REALTORS®:**

Missouri REALTORS® develop and publish a lot of content, including blogs. We always welcome blogs from members. Here are some tips we hope you find helpful if you wish to write a blog for Missouri REALTORS®.

Before launching a new blog, please discuss your plan with the Missouri REALTORS® communications team. The team will want to know the answers to the following questions, so it will be helpful if you consider them in advance of your request:

- Is a new blog the best place to share this message?  
*(Or are there existing communications channels that could be used instead?)*
- What is the theme of the blog?
- Who is the audience?
- What is the purpose/topic?

#### **4.2 Drafting your blog:**

When creating a blog to be published by Missouri REALTORS®, you must:

*Respect copyright:* Use caution when publishing text, pictures, video, or other content that was not created by the Association. Almost all written content is protected by copyright laws and requires third parties to obtain a permission or license from the content's author prior to using it in any manner.

*Creative Commons:* In most cases, content created under a Creative Commons license is still protected from commercial use. Association staff members shouldn't republish Creative Commons content unless that content is specifically licensed for commercial use.

*Linking vs. republishing:* Whenever possible, link to content elsewhere on the web instead of republishing it. Excerpt or quote whenever possible with a link back to the original materials.

The association encourages meaningful exchange on its blogs/websites on issues involving REALTORS® and real estate. All comments are published unless they violate the Missouri REALTORS® policy.

#### **4.3 How to blog effectively:**

Below are some ideas to help you create engaging and relevant content.

*Know your audience:* Be sure your content is relevant to the audience you're trying to reach. Write clear headlines. The headline should pull readers in; write so the headline makes sense out of context; many will see only the headline in a reader through syndication and will need to click through to read the full post.

*Be interesting:* Write blog posts in a conversational voice. Don't sound unprofessional, but there is no need to adopt the sometimes-formal tone of a news release or article. Blog posts express observations, share experiences, and point readers to interesting information. One goal of a blog post is to start a conversation with readers, so feel free to invite comments or ask questions.

*Be wise:* Whether you're posting personally or professionally, don't write anything in a blog post or comment that you wouldn't want published with your name or the Association's in the *New York Times*.

*Link intelligently:* Credit the original author(s) of the material. Provide a description of where the link will take the reader, and link to the exact page that you are referring to in your post.

*Tip: Don't link to content that readers can't access without paying a subscription fee, or that the user must register to access. If you do link to password-protected content, explain what to expect if they click on the link.*

*Add depth with multimedia:* Consider including videos, images, or other non-text content. Keep in mind that more readers will click on links with thumbnail images than links without them.

## 5. Violations of Missouri REALTORS® Social Media Policy

Missouri REALTORS® reserves the right to remove posts or comments that violate any of the aforementioned rules. Missouri REALTORS® also reserves the right to block members who continuously break the regulations laid out in this policy. If volunteer leaders or staff take actions that are inconsistent with this policy, they may be required to remove, correct, or revise internet postings in violation of the policy. A violation of this Social Media Policy may be cause for removing a volunteer leader from his/her position and may be basis for taking disciplinary action (including termination) against an employee, depending on federal, state, and local law.