



THE IG UPDATE



December 2022

IG Update 23-01: Guidance on Personal Social Media Use

On 12 August 2022, the Secretary of Defense released DODI 5400.17, establishing the first department-wide social media policy.

In addition to outlining guidance on official social media accounts, this policy also provides guidance on personal social media use by DOD personnel.

While personnel are authorized to have *personal social media accounts, they must adhere to the following rules:

Maintain a clear distinction between personal and official accounts:

- When initially activating an account, personnel should use personal contact information (email/telephone).
- All personal social media accounts must be clearly identified as personal.
- Accounts must avoid use of DOD titles, insignia, uniforms, or symbols that imply DOD sanction or endorsement.
- Personnel are encouraged to include a disclaimer, such as, *“views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent views of DOD or its Components.”*
- Personnel can forward, like, or link to official information, provided it does not imply DOD endorsement.

Do not disclose non-public information:

- Personnel are prohibited from disclosing non-public information to further private interests or others’ private interests.
- Personnel must adhere to operations security and unit-level directives (also while deployed).

Do not conduct official business on personal social media accounts:

- Personnel can not use personal accounts to conduct official DOD communications.
- Personnel cannot use personal social media accounts so friends, followers, or private contacts can gain access to DOD programs or seek action from DOD officials.

Do not accept compensation for any activity relating to one’s status as a DOD Civilian Employee or Service member:

- Personnel cannot use their official position or public office for personal financial gain, or the endorsement of any product, service, or enterprise. Use of one’s official position includes use of official titles, photos displaying a connection to one’s DOD status (photo in uniform/wear of lapel pin or lanyard).
- Personnel cannot use their official position for the private gain of friends, relatives, or persons.

Do not engage in prohibited political activity, as defined in applicable law and regulation.

- Personnel cannot engage in political activity on their personal social media while in the Federal workplace or while on-duty (telework included).
- Political activity is defined as an activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political party, or partisan political group.

***Note: IG Update 23-01 only covers DODI 5400.17, Section 8. Please review sections 1-8 for guidance on official accounts.**

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References/Resources

- Department of Defense Instruction 5400.17, “Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes”
- Section 2635.702 of Title 5, CFR
- <https://www.army.mil/socialmedia/>



ig.army.mil

The following graphic demonstrates use of a personal account in an official capacity and was adapted from an actual senior leader account.

PROFILE PICTURE

Inclusion of rank or official command photo, ICW other information on profile, further misconstrues this as an official account. Images in uniform are acceptable, so long as it doesn't imply DoD sanction or endorsement.

NAME & USERNAME

Rank and name are being used in conjunction with an unofficial, personal account. To fix, remove rank from name and do not use official titles or rank within a created username.

Maj. Gen. Joe Smith
2, 273 tweets

Maj. Gen. Joe Smith @joesmith42

Division Commander, Dad, Husband, Soldier, Jeep Fanatic, Scuba Diver, Runner

Washington, D.C. www.army.mil Joined June 2012

592 Following 5,934 Followers

Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

Maj. Gen. Joe Smith @joesmith42 • 4h
Team, don't forget the next town hall will be 4pm Thursday in the theater to address concerns related to barracks and the quality of life for our Soldiers here on post.

VERIFICATION

A verified personal account does not constitute an official DoD account. Personal accounts that are verified as a government account may be misconstrued as an official account.

BIO

Mixes both official duty title and personal information, which may also imply endorsement of a commercial product. To fix, remove titles and do not include references to official positions.

CONTENT

Posting information in an official capacity through a personal account is prohibited. Soldiers may forward, like, or link to official information as long as it doesn't imply status as an official account.

WEBSITE

Inclusion of an official website on a personal account can easily imply that this is an official account. To fix, remove or replace with a personal website.