



# ACSSQUARTERLY

## To Post... ...or Not to Post

Q2 2017



### ***SOCIAL MEDIA:***

*Advice from ACSS on how to manage social media to prevent conflict in your career.*



# AVOID A FACEBOOK FIASCO

**A**s the use of social media rises, so do the instances in which social media causes harm to the careers of state excluded employees. For many, Facebook and other social media outlets have become a ritualistic part of modern society - either voyeuristically to see what others are doing, or to vent, brag, or comment on the things happening in one's life. Status updates and photo documentation of one's life can be a way to cope with a situation or to simply feel that someone is listening and may offer validation or feedback. ACSS advises on ways to ensure your career will not be jeopardized by posting something you may feel is harmless.

There is ALWAYS a possibility that anything you post can be seen by anyone and may come back around to threaten your career. ACSS Labor Relations Representatives (LRRs) have witnessed the gamut of issues where social media has damaged or tarnished the career of a manager or supervisor. Here are some examples:

- A Supervisor posted a vague, exaggerated post about being so frustrated at work he wanted to hit someone. Someone saw the post and showed it to the Supervisor's Manager. The Supervisor was then terminated for violating the workplace violence policy.
- A Staff Services Manager I was excited to learn she had been assigned to work on tasks in a newly-formed department. On her lunch break, she took a photo of the paper memo and posted it to her Facebook feed. Since the memo was considered property of the state, her department's strict security policies forbid her to share such materials publicly. She thought her Facebook post was private and did not properly check her security settings. Unintentionally, her profile was accidentally set to "public", and her post circulated through the internet. Ultimately, her Manager found it. Her Manager demoted her as a result of the post and the incident became a permanent part of her employment record.
- An off-duty Peace Officer used his home computer to post comments supporting the police force's actions during a recent fatal shooting of two unarmed African Americans. An unknown person found the Officer's post offensive and anonymously reported it to his

Supervisors. The Supervisors suspended the Peace Officer for 10 days after determining that he had violated the police department's policies prohibiting the usage of social media to discuss a pending criminal investigation.

These cases are examples of the type of issues that are becoming more frequent with the usage of social media that can cause serious harm to a Manager's or Supervisor's career.

In the last few years, ACSS Labor Relations Representatives have experienced a rise in the usage of social media among excluded employees that causes negativity or interference in their careers. They have provided the following tips on using social media to prevent hardship and to help you protect the integrity of your career:



## FRIEND OR FOE?

Be careful who you become friends with on Facebook. Do not be friends with your co-workers on Facebook. If you post something that a co-worker sees, it can easily get passed around via social media and end up being seen by your management or staff higher up, even if you aren't friends with them on Facebook.

## GOING POSTAL

Never post anything on Facebook about work. Seemingly harmless posts can be interpreted the wrong way very easily. Posts that are inappropriate and potentially incriminating are posting things like: "If only my employees would learn to listen - they act worse than my toddler!" Or, "My boss is such an idiot!" When feeling frustrated at work, it may make you feel better temporarily to vent about the issue in the heat of the moment, but it is best to keep your negative feelings about work off Facebook or other media outlets completely.

## SETTING IT STRAIGHT

Know your privacy settings and check them



often. Use the help guide in the side bar of this article to check your Facebook privacy settings. You may think your posts are private and can only be seen by your friends, but in actuality, your settings may be accidentally set to public (a.k.a. “global”). Facebook makes updates to their site frequently and your settings may have unexpectedly changed due to an update. It is important for you to check your privacy settings often to make sure they are set properly. Also, note that not only can you set your privacy settings for all default posts, you have the power to change the privacy settings of each post. Make sure you look for the “private” or “public” icon in each post to verify the permissions for that post are set appropriately.

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Know your particular department’s policies. Each department has its own policy file for employees that specifically outlines the “do’s” and “don’ts” within your workplace. Some departments have stricter policies than others, depending on the nature of the department. Also, know your SPB Job Classification description details and understand the expectations of your duties as an employee representing the State of California. Keep in mind that state departments tend to have a greater interest in regulating speech of public employees to ensure the reputation of the state is not jeopardized.

### POLITICALLY CHARGED

Avoid making political posts or post on particularly controversial or sensitive political topics. Even if you are not posting about your specific workplace, politically heated posts and comments should stay off Facebook. Whether the hot issue is local, national, or worldly, try to avoid this type of discussion completely on social media outlets. This is especially critical in positions where you are in a very high position or a position of influence within your department. These kinds of posts could potentially bring negative effects to your position.

### GIVE IT A BREAK

Don’t use social media during work hours or while in the workplace at all. Try not to do it on regular work breaks or lunch breaks either. Use common sense and again refer to your workplace policies on personal time usage.

By following these helpful tips and using common sense, you can help prevent a catastrophe in your career. While a negative post like “I hate my job” can’t directly get you terminated, your social media posts may be searched and submitted as evidence. Any negative material you post about your job can be used as an “add on” piece of evidence to an existing case you may have pending against you in an unrelated

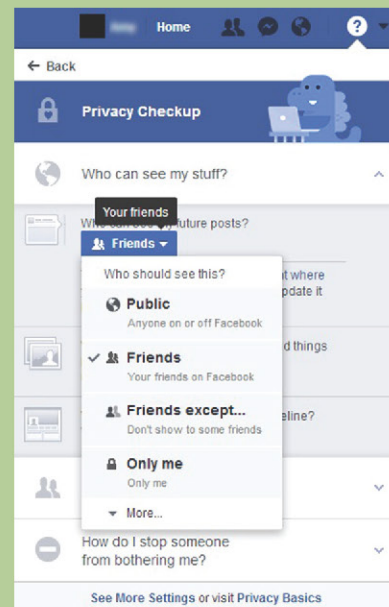
## HOW TO CHECK YOUR FACEBOOK PRIVACY SETTINGS

Your Facebook profile might not be as secure as you think. Even Facebook agrees that you should check your privacy settings often and make sure that the things you don’t want others to see are set to private. Here’s how to check:



1. On your Facebook page, click the **small round question mark icon** in the upper left corner to pop up the Help Center menu.
2. Click on **Privacy Shortcuts** near the small gear icon.
3. Click on **Who can see my stuff?**

The **Privacy Checkup** window has many other tools to help you with privacy settings – check to see what posts you have been tagged in and view what your timeline looks like to the public.



matter. Negative social media posts, in general, could be interpreted as judgments on you character, and could be especially harmful to you if you are already involved in a job-related issue.

State employees do have a constitutionally protected right to the freedom of speech and expression however, it must be balanced against the State’s best interest. Government Code section 19572 Other Failure Good Behavior requires state employees to behave in such a manner that misconduct does not impair or disrupt public services.

ACSS cannot guarantee to repair and reinstate your career, should you run into a difficult issue. But we can help to provide advice, stand up for your rights, represent you in your fight, and hopefully alleviate the issue to improve your current situation. Don’t fight the fight alone. If you are not already a member, join ACSS now by visiting [www.ACSS.org/join](http://www.ACSS.org/join). Late joiners will not be represented. If you are having difficulty in your career, contact your local ACSS Labor Relations Representative today at **800-624-2137!** 📞


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**Q2  
2017**

First Name Last Name

Address 1

Address 2

City, State ZIP

## SPRING SAVINGS! ACSS Member Benefits

As an ACSS member, you are entitled to receive discounts on tickets, insurance, and many other exclusive savings! Spring into action and take advantage of these discounts on your favorite theme parks and attractions.

Visit [www.CalCSEA.org/MemberBenefits](http://www.CalCSEA.org/MemberBenefits) for more information on YOUR ACSS Member Benefits!



## GET INVOLVED!

**Come to your local ACSS Chapter's next meeting:**

**508** - May 11 (Stockton)

**507** - May 16 (TBD)

**511** - May 18 (Los Angeles)

**514** - May 18 (Ontario)

**502/503** - May 24 (Sacramento)

**505** - June 1 (East Bay Area)

**513** - June 2 (San Diego)

**504** - June 6 (TBD)

**512** - June 29 (TBD)

For more info, visit [www.ACSS.org/Events](http://www.ACSS.org/Events)

Contact ACSS Headquarters:  
(800) 624-2137 | [acss@ACSS.org](mailto:acss@ACSS.org)