



Revised June 2023

ParaSport® Ontario – Social Media Policy

Policy Statement

Social media offers the opportunity for organizations and individuals to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or access information, memories and opinions. ParaSport Ontario is committed to using social media channels to engage and inform like-minded individuals and to build a safe social community for all supporters of ParaSport Ontario. This social media policy outlines how the ParaSport Ontario and its supporters should conduct themselves online. This document helps to safeguard our brand's reputation while also encouraging our community to responsibly share ParaSport Ontario's message. ParaSport Ontario will host social media platforms and be present in online communities such as Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Instagram, but these guidelines can be extended to any relevant social networking website. ParaSport Ontario employees, board members, athletes, participants and volunteers are encouraged to contribute to ParaSport Ontario's social media platform and online communications.

Purpose of Social Media

ParaSport Ontario welcomes comments, constructive feedback and follower engagement pertaining to ParaSport Ontario and its activities. When posting media content to social networking sites, it is helpful to remember the reasons for doing so. When using ParaSport Ontario social sites, the aim should be to:

- Reach a wider, more diverse audience
- Promote ParaSport Ontario events and programs
- Educate and inform
- Promote public awareness of adapted sport opportunities for people with disabilities

Authorised Users of ParaSport Ontario Accounts

Only people who have been authorized to use ParaSport Ontario social network accounts may do so. Authorization is usually provided by the Executive Director. It is typically granted when social media-related tasks form a core component of an employee or intern's job. Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures that ParaSport Ontario's social media presence is consistent and cohesive.

Guiding Principles for ParaSport Ontario's Social Media Use

An important guiding principle for ParaSport Ontario is to ensure that individuals understand that online communications is just the same as in the 'real' world. If you break a rule online, then it's just as serious as if it occurred on the field of play, during a committee meeting or elsewhere. Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

Other guiding principles for staff and volunteers engaging in social media include:

- Promote ParaSport Ontario's mission, vision and values
- Educate and inform
- Respect the audience, respect our organization, and all those that are a part of it
- Exclude confidential information
- Respect the privacy of colleagues, staff, athletes and volunteers
- Ask yourself before you post if you are adding value
- Spell check and accessibility
- If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly

General Posting Guidelines

Regardless of which social networks we are using, or whether using business or personal accounts on company time, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

- Know the social network. Employees should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It's important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.

- If unsure, don't post it. Staff should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If an employee feels an update or message might cause complaints or offence — or be otherwise unsuitable — they should not post it. Staff members can always consult the Executive Director for advice.
- Be thoughtful and polite. Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. Employees should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.
- Look out for security threats. Staff members should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware. Further details below.
- Keep personal use reasonable. Although the company believes that having employees who are active on social media can be valuable both to those employees and to the business, staff should exercise restraint in how much personal use of social media they make during working hours.
- Don't make promises without checking. Some social networks are very public, so employees should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of ParaSport Ontario without checking that the company can deliver on the promises. Direct any enquiries to the Executive Director.
- Handle complex queries via other channels. Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and customer issues. Once a customer has made contact, employees should handle further communications via the most appropriate channel — usually email or telephone.
- Don't escalate things. It's easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. Employees should always take the time to think before responding, and hold back if they are in any doubt at all.

Remember that once something has been posted it can be viewed immediately and it can be viewed forever. Remember; when in doubt, leave it out.

Editorial Control

ParaSport Ontario reserves the right to delete comments violating public morals, public order, laws and regulations, rights of others or containing defamatory comments, violent or inciting violence, offensive or racist comments.

Moving Forward

Because social media moves fast, this policy should be considered a living document—ongoing updates will be necessary. The goal here is to provide our team with straightforward guidelines that are easy to follow.