

Australian Capital Territory

Emergencies (ESA Social Media Policy) Commissioner's Guidelines 2011*

Notifiable Instrument NI2011 – 606

made under the

Emergencies Act 2004, s 11 (Commissioner may make guidelines).

1. Name of Instrument

This instrument is the *Emergencies (ESA Social Media Policy) Commissioner's Guidelines 2011*.

2. Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after it is notified.

3. Commissioner's Guidelines

I make the *Emergencies (the ESA Social Media Policy) Commissioner's Guidelines 2011* at Schedule 1 to this instrument.

4. Revocation

Nil

Mark Crossweller AFSM FAIM
Emergency Services Commissioner
11 October 2011

*Name amended under Legislation Act, s 60

ACT EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY

COMMISSIONER'S GUIDELINES

relating to

the ESA Social Media Policy

September 2011

Schedule 1

ACT Emergency Services Agency Social Media Policy

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Approved by:

ESA Executive Group

Date: 6/9/2011

Mark Crossweller, Commissioner

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1. Introduction

The ACT Emergency Services Agency (ESA) recognises the need to use social media platforms for the dissemination of a range of information to the ACT community.

2. Background

The public requirement for up to the minute information, advice and when required, warnings, in times of emergency, through traditional media methods and new social media platforms, has placed an expectation on the ESA to deliver a real-time virtual commentary on the situation we are dealing with at the time such as a bushfire, storm, flood or a mass casualty incident in the Territory.

The fast pace in which many people are taking up use of social media like Twitter and Facebook means there is a reasonable expectation within the community that the ESA can communicate directly with the people of Canberra.

"So if I can do my banking, update my work website, tweet my family and friends while on holiday in South America and upload photos all from my iPhone then surely I can access information and what I need to know if a bushfire is burning in the neighbourhood and I can smell smoke. How far away is it? Is it burning towards me and my family? What should I do etc?"

Communities want to be in control and expect emergency services to provide them with the information to do so.

3. Objectives

The aim of this social media policy is to outline to ESA staff and volunteers their responsibilities when using social media for work and private purposes when related to the ESA and the four operational services.

4. Scope

This social media policy applies to all employees and volunteers of the ACT Emergency Services Agency including ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire Brigade, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service.

5. Principles

The use of social media by the ACT Emergency Services Agency needs to be based on the following principles:

Trust;
Transparency;
Timeliness;
Accuracy;
Accessibility; and
Single source of truth.

6. Target audience

The audience for this policy is all employees and volunteers of the ACT Emergency Services Agency including ACT Ambulance Service, ACT Fire Brigade, ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service.

7. Related documents and policies

- ACT Government Social Media Guidelines (currently being considered by Cabinet).

- ACT Public Sector Management Act 1994, section 9 (General Obligations of Public Employees). <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1994-37/current/pdf/1994-37.pdf>

- Public Sector Management Standards 2006, part 2 (Ethics)
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2006-187/current/pdf/2006-187.pdf>

- Relevant Enterprise Agreements (Misconduct and Discipline)

- ACT Government Public Service Induction Manual
http://shareservices/actgovt/HRdocs/ACTPS_Induction.pdf

- ACT Government Acceptable use of IT policy
<http://shareservices/actgovt/ICTpolicies.htm>

- Territory's Records Act 2002
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2002-18/current/pdf/2002-18.pdf>

- Privacy Act 1988
http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/db_6269/default.asp

8. Version control

This policy will be reviewed annually by the ESA Media and Community Information Unit in consultation with the ESA Executive Group.

9. What is social media?

Social media tools are defined in this policy as all online media which allow user participation and interaction.

Some common examples are:

- ♦ social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, Google +, MySpace, Bebo, Friendster;
- ♦ video and photo sharing web sites, e.g. Flickr, YouTube, blip.tv;
- ♦ micro-blogging and activity stream sites, e.g. Twitter, Jaiku, Yammer;
- ♦ blogs and blogging platforms, e.g. WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr;
- ♦ forums and discussion boards, e.g. Trove Forum, Yahoo! Groups, Google Groups;
- ♦ online encyclopaedias, e.g. Wikipedia; and
- ♦ any other web sites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools, e.g. wikis.

10. Purpose of social media for the ESA

The purpose of social media for the ESA is to:

- ♦ provide a means to disseminate whole-of-ESA real-time emergency information, alerts, updates and warnings directly to the ACT community;
- ♦ provide a means for the ESA to promote hazard specific community education themed key messages directly to the ACT community;
- ♦ provide a means for the ESA to promote recruitment activities;
- ♦ provide a means for Chief Officers to communicate directly and frequently with their service members/workforce; and
- ♦ provide a means for ESA volunteer members to communicate brigade/unit activities with each other and the Canberra community.

11. Use of ESA social media accounts by ESA staff and volunteers

Responsibility for the administration of ESA social media accounts including the publishing of content will be determined by the Commissioner, relevant Chief Officer or Executive Director. Any ESA staff member or volunteer who is delegated these functions by the Commissioner, their Chief Officer or Executive Director must do so in accordance with this policy.

12. Inappropriate use of ESA social media accounts

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- ♦ conducting private business;
- ♦ using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language in content;
- ♦ accessing, downloading or transmitting any kind of sexually explicit material, violent images including graphic images of blood or gore (without medical purpose);
- ♦ accessing, downloading or transmitting information on the use and construction of weapons, explosives and other tools of violence or terrorism;
- ♦ accessing, downloading or transmitting any material deemed to be illegal under State, Territory or Commonwealth law;
- ♦ accessing, downloading or transmitting hate speeches and overt racism; material extolling the inherent or moral superiority or inferiority of a particular race, ethnic group, or sexual orientation; racial epithets; or religious bigotry;
- ♦ compromising the privacy of any person;
- ♦ using services for personal political purposes;
- ♦ using services for industrial campaigns (apart from messages sent by officials of unions and professional associations for informational or consultative purposes);
- ♦ attempting to gain unauthorised access to the computing resources of other organisations; and
- ♦ disruption of the integrity of the ESA's data or information services.

13. Use of personal social media accounts by ESA staff and volunteers

The ACT Government Social Media Guidelines states *'Personal use is when you are commenting on a matter in neither an official or professional capacity. This would normally be done with a profile linked to a personal email address. Personal use at work is only allowed if it is incidental to formal duties and all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines are followed. You should not use work email for private blogging or other forms of online comment.'*

ESA staff and volunteers should refrain from making comments or providing information related to their employment and/or membership of the ESA when using social media for personal use. Using social media for personal use should also be done with a profile that is not identified as an official staff account.

14. Risks associated with online social media activity

There is a number of risks associated with online social media activity by ESA staff and volunteers including:

- ♦ Breaching section 9 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (General Obligations of Public Employees);
- ♦ Plagiarising or breach copyright/Creative Commons conditions when using or repurposing material;
- ♦ Excessive time could be used browsing social media applications;
- ♦ Putting social media to an inappropriate use;
- ♦ Bringing the ESA's brands and reputation into disrepute;
- ♦ Representing a personal political view as that of the ESA, the department and the ACT Government;
- ♦ Representing themselves as someone else either within the ESA or outside of - the ESA;
- ♦ Making promises or statements regarding the ESA's operations which are not true; and
- ♦ Disclosing personal information relating to ESA employees, volunteers or clients, or official information which is classified or commercial-in-confidence.

Employees who misuses social media, and are found to have committed misconduct under the relevant enterprise agreement, may be subject to discipline action up to and including termination of their employment.

15. Official ESA social media accounts

The ESA has established accounts on the following social media platforms for the public dissemination of emergency information, alerts, updates and warnings.

Twitter twitter.com/act_esa

Facebook facebook.com/actemergencyservicesagency

YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/ACTEMERGENCYSERVICES>

These are the single source of truth for the release of all operational alerts, updates and warnings released by the ESA and are set up as a one-way communication channel out from the ESA only. Services are not permitted to issue any information about operational activities. Information will be published to these accounts by the ESA Media and Community Information Unit only.

The ESA will endeavour to monitor these social media accounts on a day to day basis but may not be able to directly respond to posted comments. During major emergencies, the ESA will constantly monitor these accounts and directly respond to posted comments and use them to collect intelligence from the community to provide into the ACT Public Information Coordination Centre (PICC) and the Incident Management Team (IMT).

A disclaimer stating this will be placed on the home pages of each account.

16. Individual ESA business unit social media accounts

Individual business units within the ESA may establish social media accounts if approved by the Commissioner on recommendation by the relevant Chief Officer or Executive Director.

This should be processed through the ESA Media and Community Information Unit. Content on ESA individual business unit social media account should be restricted to the following areas:

- Community Education key messaging;
- Recruitment of staff/volunteers; and
- Chief Officers communication with members/workforce.

Twitter

ACT Ambulance Service	twitter.com/ACTAmbulance
ACT Fire Brigade	twitter.com/ACTFireBrigade
ACT Rural Fire Service	twitter.com/ACTRFS
ACT State Emergency Service	twitter.com/ACT_SES

Facebook

ACT Ambulance Service	ACT	Ambulance	Service	
ACT Fire Brigade	ACT	Fire	Brigade	
ACT Rural Fire Service	ACT	Rural	Fire	Service
ACT State Emergency Service	ACTSES			

BlogSpot

ACT Rural Fire Service	actrfs.blogspot.com
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The following disclaimer will be placed on the home pages of each account:

This account is not monitored constantly by the

Not all comments will be replied to.

To report a life threatening emergency ring 000.

To find out more information during an emergency go to www.esa.act.gov.au or call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

17. Unofficial ESA social media accounts

A number of ESA volunteer brigades and units have social media accounts.

These accounts should not feature any official ESA branding such as a service logo.

ESA volunteer brigades and units social media accounts should also include a disclaimer stating it is not an official account of the ESA and provide a link to the relevant official ESA account.

Example of a disclaimer:

This is the Twitter account of the ACTRFS Headquarters Brigade. This is not an official site of the ACTRFS or ESA. For information about current bushfires and other emergencies go to twitter.com/act_esa

18. Record keeping arrangements

All posts published on ESA social media platforms must be documented in accordance with the Territory Records Act 2002.

19. ESA social media diagram

The diagram below illustrates how the ESA Social Media accounts are the single point of truth for all incident alerts, updates and emergency warnings.

