Social Media Policy

Version 6 - Last updated July 8, 2011

Policy

Social media can be defined as the sum of various tools and technologies that help users generate and share content. Websites, platforms and technologies that allow users to post content, comment or vote are generally considered “social”. This includes websites and blogs as well as platforms or networks dedicated to social media.

VIA Rail Canada (VIA or the Corporation) recognizes that its employees, customers and stakeholders are likely to take part in social media and has identified the need to establish guidelines with regards to its own social media presence.

Objective

This Policy defines the rightful uses of social media within VIA Rail and provides guidelines for VIA employees who engage in social media, whether personally or professionally.

Supporting guidelines are included in the Social Media Champions Guide, which detail the structure of the social media governance at VIA. This guide also contains specific rules and guidelines for the Social Media Champions committee members.

This Policy is subject to ongoing review and evaluation, and modifications will be made as deemed necessary to respond to circumstances and evolving needs of the Corporation.

Scope and Application

The Policy and supporting guidelines apply to all VIA employees and cover their personal use of social media as well as their professional use, both during and outside office hours. Each VIA employee is responsible to read and comply with this Policy, as well as any other guidelines and standards that are in place.

Due to the nature of social media, it is nearly impossible to create a clear distinction between personal and professional profiles. VIA strongly encourages its employees to proactively disclose their affiliation to the Company when discussing matters relating to the railway or tourism industries, VIA Rail or the Government of Canada.

In addition to this Policy, VIA employees must comply with the following policies at all times while using social media, whether for personal or professional use.

- Code of Conduct – Section 6.05 – Communications and Computer Systems
- Computer Network and Internet Usage Policy
• **Email Usage Policy**

• **Financial Policy, Practice and Authority Manual** – Section 02.04 – Computer Security

• **Information Security Policy**

• **Policy on the Safe Use of Electronic Devices** (not yet approved)

• **Cellular Devices Usage Policy** (not yet approved)

When using VIA’s social media accounts, Social Media Champions should also adhere to the guiding principles, rules and procedures found in the [Social Media Champions Guide](#).

For clarifications on the guidelines discussed herein, employees can contact their People representative.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

*General Counsel and Secretary* has ultimate authority in the interpretation and administration of this Policy.

*Social Media Community Manager* has the responsibility to supervise social media activities through a cross functional committee of Social Media Champions.

*Social Media Champions* have the responsibility to represent VIA Rail online and post on the company’s behalf using VIA Rail social media accounts. VIA has created a dedicated taskforce and a network of Social Media Champions, which includes members from a variety of relevant services. [*Only the members of these groups are allowed to speak on behalf of VIA Rail online, using VIA social media accounts and under the supervision of VIA’s dedicated community manager, provided that they have received the necessary approvals from their supervisor.*]

Social Media Champions will be allowed to represent VIA online only when they have been trained on the proper procedure, conduct, tone and manner to adopt and best practices relating to each platform.

*Employees* are encouraged to use their personal social media accounts to engage with and promote VIA and its services. Employees may also use social media for work-related socializing and charitable organizing, for example, in the context of regional social committees or fundraising efforts. Some employees may also need to access social media for professional purposes (e.g. for research). Only designated employees may represent themselves as official VIA spokespeople online.
Employees shall not post negative or disparaging content, either real or perceived, about the Corporation, the Government of Canada, the railway and tourism industries, colleagues, customers, consultants, suppliers and business partners.

Social networks are a means of communication, and as with all forms of communications, such as telephone or email, employees are expected to limit their personal use to the essential. Personal use of social media must never interfere with an employee’s duties or with operational requirements.

Requirements

All VIA employees’ online conduct should be dictated by the following principles:

- **Be respectful.** No spam, untruthful, defamatory or discriminatory comments and expletives. Remain polite and appropriate at all times.

- **Be honest.** Mention your affiliation to VIA Rail Canada when responding or posting a comment that is related to the railway or tourism industries, VIA Rail Canada or the Government of Canada. However, unless you have been assigned the task to represent VIA online as part of the Social Media Champions committee, also remember to indicate that you speak on your own behalf and not that of VIA. Please use this statement to do so:

  “*I am employed by VIA Rail. However, the opinions expressed here are my own and VIA is in no way liable or responsible for their content.*”

- **Be responsible.** Before posting, ask yourself the following questions:
  - Would I say this to a customer? A journalist? My supervisor?
  - Would I mind if this comment was published in a newspaper?
  - Would I be comfortable with this content being attributed to me in many years’ time?

- **Do:**
  - Review the terms of engagement of each platform you wish to participate in
  - Engage in social media personally using your own name and not on behalf of VIA
  - Remain truthful and accurate at all times
  - Mention your affiliation to VIA Rail, if relevant to the topic of conversation
  - State that your views are your own using a disclosure statement, unless you are authorized otherwise
  - Act online as you would with colleagues or customers
Contact your People representative with any questions or to know how to handle a given situation.

- **Do not**
  - Use expletives
  - Make disrespectful, defamatory or dishonest comments
  - Share sensitive information about customers, colleagues or VIA online
  - Position yourself as a VIA representative unless you have expressly received the authorization to do so and have received access to VIA’s official platforms
  - Create social media accounts for VIA without the prior consent of the dedicated community manager

**Creation of Social Media Accounts**

Only Social Media Champions are allowed to make new social media accounts that represent the Corporation, including any of its products or services. Prior to creating a new social media account, Social Media Champions will obtain the approval of the dedicated community manager, who will ensure the account respects VIA’s Social Media Policy and is created and maintained according to best practices. For detailed information on network-specific guidelines, please see the Social Media Champions Guide - Appendix A (Facebook) and Appendix B (Twitter).

**Confidentiality, Privacy and Legal Considerations**

Always remember that you are liable for your online actions and that VIA’s employee policies apply at all times when using social media. Keeping that in mind, make sure to:

- Respect all copyright, fair use and disclosure laws
- Always credit sources with citations or links
- Never divulge personal/confidential information about VIA, your colleagues, our customers, consultants, suppliers and business partners. If a conversation requires you to discuss sensitive information or request private details, make sure that you are authorized to do so and use the private communication methods provided by the social media platform to request the details or continue the conversation using a more direct method of communication such as email or telephone
- Remember that all content posted online, even on private or personal accounts, is in the public domain

**Non-Compliance**

In addition to all copyright protection legislation, legal recourse and contractual obligations stipulated in collective agreements or in specific directives or standards,
anyone that does not comply with this Policy, directives, procedures, legal obligations, or specific rules and regulations, contracts or collective agreements will be subject to appropriate corrective action up to and including dismissal.

**Approval**

This Policy is approved by:

Yves Desjardins-Siciliano  
General Counsel and Secretary  
, on July 8, 2011

Steve Del Bosco  
Chief Marketing and Sales Officer  
, on July 8, 2011