



Social media and work

CPSU members are increasingly using online forums and social media; both in the workplace and in their personal lives.

Like other citizens, APS employees have a right to participate in political affairs, including online. Our advice is to always keep your language courteous and respectful, and avoid overly harsh or extreme criticism of the government.

As a union member, you can participate in union activities such as liking and sharing CPSU Facebook and Twitter posts. It's OK to discuss your employment rights. It's OK to engage in respectful political debate. If you're in the APS and for most employers, you should generally avoid commenting on the work of your agency, including re-sharing posts about the work your agency does; you have an obligation to uphold the good reputation of the agency you work in.

For example: climate change is a legitimate public debate that APS employees can participate in as Australian citizens, but it may be unwise for employees of the Clean Energy Regulator to do so.

Although most workplaces have set guidelines for employee behaviour online, many aspects of how an employee's personal online behaviour can impact their work are yet to be tested and the law is constantly developing.

The CPSU can help members navigate their way through these developments. Here are some guidelines to help you stay out of trouble when online:

- Always keep your workplace's policy on social media usage and public comment in mind.
- Do not engage in any conduct online that is illegal or inappropriate. Don't make derogatory or defamatory remarks, break copyright, bully, intimidate, harass other users, use insults or post content that is hateful, slanderous, threatening, discriminating or pornographic.
- Don't ever assume you're anonymous. There are many ways to find out the real identity of an online alias.
- Remember that publishing is permanent. Even if you delete a post straight away someone may have already shared it or taken a screen grab, and it is searchable in web caches.
- Never drink and type.
- Maximise available privacy settings on sites like Facebook, and ask friends to be mindful when posting photographs or information about you.
- If you have doubts about how your online activity will impact your work, call the CPSU.
- If you are questioned or disciplined at work by management about your online activity, immediately cease that activity and call the CPSU.

Quick tips

- Know your workplace's social media rules.
- Be sensible and courteous when posting.
- The Fair Work Act protects your ability to engage in union activities and seek advice from your union, including online.
- If in doubt or trouble, call the CPSU.

For advice and support contact your workplace delegate or the CPSU Member Service Centre
1300 137 636 | members@cpsu.org.au | www.cpsu.org.au