



Subject: Social Media Policy

Purpose: To provide guidance for social media usage and interactions

Scope: Benchmark employees and volunteers

Related Forms: HIPAA Do's and Don'ts, Email and Software Policy, Code of Ethics, Confidentiality of Information, Use of Personal Cell Phone at Work Policy

Related Entity: All entities owned and managed by A.W. Holdings, LLC

Description:

Benchmark Human Services (Benchmark) requires that employees adhere to the following directives with regards to social media. Social media should be broadly understood for the purposes of this policy to include blogs, microblogs, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters online forums, social networking sites such as (without limitation) Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok, YouTube, Periscope, MeWe, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Pinterest, Reddit, Twitch, Vimeo, and dating websites and apps.

Social media platforms are powerful communications tools that may have a significant impact on personal, professional, and organizational reputations. Benchmark has developed the following guidelines and rules to help employees understand how best to protect their personal and professional reputations and Benchmark's organizational reputation when participating in social media communications, whether on or off duty and whether or not they are using Benchmark property such as computers or smartphones or their personal devices.

- A. Professional Relationships: Employee relationships with the people we serve and their families must be professional at all times. Communication using social media with the person served or their family is prohibited.
- B. Follow all Benchmark Policies, Terms of Service of social media platforms, and applicable law. For example, you must maintain the confidentiality of the identity, health conditions, and medical information of persons we serve under HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act when participating in social media activities. Employees are prohibited from posting photos, videos, or any information about the individuals served on social media platforms. Benchmark does have company sanctioned platforms on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as blog hosted on the company website. Employees may share information, photos, videos, or posts on their personal pages that Benchmark has posted on its social media and virtual platforms.
- C. Respect Benchmark time and property: Benchmark computers and time on the job are generally reserved for work-related business. You should not let your use of social media interfere with the performance of your job.

Benchmark Human Services is an Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

Effective Date: 01/01/11	Source: Director of Communications	Approved by: Policy Review Committee
Revision date(s): 08/06/14, 01/29/16, 11/01/16, 02/21/19, 01/25/21		
Review date(s): 01/29/16, 11/01/16, 11/13/17, 11/12/18, 02/21/19, 02/21/20, 01/25/21		

- D. Protect confidential and proprietary information: Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Benchmark, persons served, family members of persons served, employees, or Benchmark vendors.
- E. Respect intellectual property rights: When posting on social media, blogs, or other online platforms, be mindful of the intellectual property (trademarks, copyright) of others and of Benchmark, including logos. For example, when you post a quote from a published source, cite your source and/or include a reference to that source.
- F. You are responsible for your actions: Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. While Benchmark respects the free speech rights of all its employees, remember that online content is often available to a wide audience, particularly if you choose to limit privacy settings. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known, and how it may reflect your personal and professional reputation and Benchmark’s reputation as an organization. Employees should refrain from engaging in online arguments or posting material that may be considered defamatory, obscene, threatening, harassing, abusive, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- G. Communicate effectively. Do not make statements which are maliciously false in your social media communications: If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. Understand that content contributed to a social media site may encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas.
- H. Authorization required to speak for Benchmark: Only designated spokespersons may speak on behalf of Benchmark. If you are asked to speak for Benchmark, refer the requesting party to the Benchmark director of communications or the communications manager and immediately notify them of the request.
- I. Identify yourself and your views as your own: If you communicate about Benchmark’s services, or have Benchmark listed as your employer in your profile information, you must disclose your name and your working relationship with Benchmark (including your job title) and include the following disclaimers:
 1. *When posting on a social media website* (such as Facebook): “The views expressed in this post are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer, Benchmark.” or “The postings on this site are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer, Benchmark.”
 2. *When contributing to a personal website* (such as a blog): “This is a personal website, produced in my own time and solely reflecting my personal opinions. Statements on this site do not necessarily represent the views or policies of my employer, Benchmark, or any other organization with which I may be presently or previously affiliated.”
- J. Notify Benchmark of misrepresentations: If you see misrepresentations about Benchmark on social media platforms, notify the Benchmark director of communications or the communications manager. Do not confront the person(s) or organization(s) who published the misrepresentation. You may also report to the chief compliance officer anonymously using the Compliance Hotline at 877-319-9669, option 6.
- K. Report violations: You should immediately notify your supervisor or any manager of any violations you observe to these guidelines and rules in this policy. Subject to applicable law, employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. However, this policy is not intended to preclude or dissuade employee discussions regarding wages or other terms and conditions of employment or other legally protected or required activities.

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