



**Irish Red Cross**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**



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## **Who these guidelines are for**

If you are an Irish Red Cross volunteer, member or staff member using social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or YouTube, if you have your own blog or if you are posting comments on other people's blogs, then these guidelines are for you.

## **Why "personal" and "private" are not the same**

While communication through social media networks is primarily a personal matter, this is not the same as it being private. In a lot of cases, written conversations inside these networks can be found through search engines such as Google. Even in cases where only your contacts can see what you write, there is a possibility that one of them will forward what you say and make it visible to a wider audience. As a result, personal conversation within social media networks should be considered public rather than private.

## **Best practice**

Please Do

**Use Disclaimers** on all social media profiles, blogs, forums and websites add the disclaimer to the profile or 'About' page.

**Example disclaimer** "All opinions are my own and don't necessarily represent positions, strategies, policy or opinions of my employer."

Be aware that this disclaimer doesn't free you from the obligations you have under the Codes of Conduct or the Fundamental principles.

**Be an ambassador** share, re-tweet, watch, click, pin, view, comment, like, follow, link...do it all.

As an Irish Red Cross representative you are encouraged to **promote** the activities of the organisation and to support Irish Red Cross campaigns. Please see Irish Red Cross Profiles at the end of this document to get started.

**Connect** with colleagues, national and international, and spread the word of the activities and success stories.

**Share** and ask for shares - don't be shy, you're promoting the largest humanitarian organisation in the world – you deserve to be heard.

**Be passionate** it's contagious. Share the passion you feel for your work and talk about the successes you have been part of.

Be true to the 7 **Fundamental Principles** as an Irish Red Cross representative you are expected to adhere to the 7 principles at all times, even online. They are unity, neutrality, impartiality, voluntary service, humanity, independence, unity and universality.

Online it is easy to be drawn into conversations that are not impartial or neutral, try to stay aware of the principles when posting and commenting.

**Be transparent** if you discuss the Irish Red Cross/Red Cross you have a duty to disclose your role within the organisation.

**Be accurate** even though your posts/comments may be primarily made up of personal opinion do your research well and check that your facts are accurate.

**Be cautious** about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses.

**Be considerate.** Anyone, including your colleagues, may be actively reading what you publish online. In choosing your words and your content, it is good practice to imagine that your supervisor and your family are reading everything you post.

**Be professional.** While it is everyone's personal decision whether to use social media networks and tools or not, you should always be aware that your behaviour and opinions reflect on the organization.

If you have **suggestions** for improvements of the Irish Red Cross or witness illegal, unsafe or unethical conduct by an Irish Red Cross employee or volunteer please use the proper channels to air your concerns and share your suggestions. Contact the Irish Red Cross communications team at [communications@redcross.ie](mailto:communications@redcross.ie).

Use the **emblem** wisely:

- Please consult the Irish Red Cross **brand guidelines** for details on the correct use of the emblem. There is a specially designed Irish Red Cross profile logo for social media sites. This can be requested from the Irish Red Cross communications team at [communications@redcross.ie](mailto:communications@redcross.ie).
- For personal pages etc. please do not use the emblem. Use a clear profile picture people like to know who they are talking to. Having a recognisable profile picture is shown to improve engagement with online audiences.

Respect **copyright** laws make sure you have permission to post any copyrighted or confidential information (e.g. images).

**Get advice** if you want to use social media to promote Irish Red Cross activities, please contact your branch PRO or the Irish Red Cross communications team at [communications@redcross.ie](mailto:communications@redcross.ie).

**Think of** the Irish Times, your parents and your boss don't say anything online (personal pages or otherwise) that you wouldn't be comfortable seeing quoted on the front page of the Irish Times, being asked about by your parents or having to justify to your boss.

**Be the first** to admit a mistake. If you have made a mistake, be upfront about it. Admit and correct the mistake. If you correct an earlier post in a blog do so visibly, e.g. by using the strikethrough function and adding a paragraph that explains the update at the end.

Use your **best judgement** if you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, let it sit for a few more hours or a day and think again whether this is what you want to say. If it still makes you feel uncomfortable and it is related to the Movement, ask your branch representative for advice.

If you see a **misrepresentation** made about Irish Red Cross online, please alert a member of the Communications team.

Protect your own **privacy** a lot of websites allow you some form of control over who can see your material. Use these features to protect your privacy.

**Get involved** there's a social media site to suit everyone.

**Use your phone** and get involved in the growing trend for video and rich media. If you have a smart phone you can publish any short, good content videos you might have from different Irish Red Cross events to your own YouTube channels. By using 'Irish Red Cross' and other words that are representative to your field of expertise in the title of the video, the description and the tags you can help the overall Irish Red Cross online presence grow.

**Make friends.** It's nice to be nice, praise the good work of any other charity or organisation that you feel is positive, adds value etc. We're all about the online karma!

PLEASE DON'T...

Reveal confidential information. If you talk online about the Irish Red Cross, by all means talk about your good work and make meaningful connections, but you must accomplish this while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of all our stakeholders.

Do not quote/talk about personal information relating to our donors/volunteers or their conversations with staff.

It is fine to point out the mistaken information using your own profile. However, do so with respect, stick to the facts and identify appropriately your affiliation to the Irish Red Cross.

When referring to other charity/first aid companies be factual and do not disparage others.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

**Administrators** for social Irish Red Cross social media accounts and profiles must be over 18.

With regard to **content** displayed on page – all branches and members to be aware that under 18s will be viewing these pages and all content should be suitable. Please refer to the [Irish Red Cross Child Protection Policy](#) for more information.

**Pictures:** Any picture featuring members/youths under 18 years old require written permission for use in Facebook and elsewhere by the parent/guardian. Download consent form.

Personal Pages:

No adult member of the Irish Red Cross should seek or accept a friend request from a member under the age of 18.

## **IRISH RED CROSS PROFILES**

Google+ [here](#)

Facebook [www.facebook.com/IrishRedCross](http://www.facebook.com/IrishRedCross)

Twitter [www.twitter.com/irishredcross](http://www.twitter.com/irishredcross)

YouTube [www.Youtube.com/IrishRedCross](http://www.Youtube.com/IrishRedCross)

LinkedIn [here](#)

Pinterest [www.pinterest.com/irishredcross](http://www.pinterest.com/irishredcross)