

# Social Media and Social Networking Policy

## A. Introduction

Ontario Bobsleigh Skeleton Association (OBSA) recognizes that social media can be used for organizational purposes to increase communication between and among its Members and partners and advance the promotion and positive profile of our sport and star athletes to a large audience. OBSA also recognizes social media will be used for personal purposes.

OBSA is committed to a sport and work environment that supports responsible and respectful use of social media by its athletes, coaches, officials, staff, Members and Board of Directors. All postings made to social media are treated as 'public,' comparable to comments or actions in a public forum or in front of a camera or microphone.

This policy describes OBSA's commitment to using social media responsibly and provides the mechanism for our organization to deal with damaging messages quickly, responsively and effectively.

## B. Policy Details

### 1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, directors, coaches, athletes, officials, volunteers and Members of Ontario Bobsleigh Skeleton Association. It applies to online behaviour when serving as a representative of OBSA and when participating as a sole individual.

The policy refers to use of a broad sweep of online activity including, but not limited to, social, professional and multi-media networks and live-blogging tools. Today, social media is no longer limited to blogs and social networking sites. You have participated in social media if you have:

- Posted a comment on a blog
- Posted a review or rated a product
- Tweeted anything
- Participated in an online poll
- Posted a status update on Facebook
- Created a LinkedIn Profile
- Uploaded a video to YouTube or Vimeo
- Shared an image on Instagram
- Shared your location on Foursquare or the like

This policy covers social media messaging and actions that fall within OBSA's organizational jurisdiction and includes, but is not restricted to, protection of individuals, our brand, our sport profile, and relationships with our sponsors and funding partners.

### 2. Standard of Conduct – Messaging

OBSA endorses a high standard of behaviour when using social media and does not condone any messages that:

- May constitute harassment, discrimination or violence;
- Are hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals;
- Refer to controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects including politics, sex, and religion;
- Are damaging to our brand and/ or relationships with our stakeholders and funding partners;
- Divulge confidential or proprietary information that belongs to OBSA; and/or
- Fail to respect the privacy of others by disclosing personal information without requisite consent.

### 3. Standard of Conduct – Posting

Only communications staff employed by OBSA, or designate, may post on the official social media sites of the Corporation unless written permission is given by OBSA.

All official inquiries about OBSA must be answered through the Corporation's official communication platforms. An individual receiving direct requests from others, e.g., a journalist, regarding issues relevant to OBSA are to contact the communications manager and/or President prior to responding and in order to frame an appropriate response, as required.

Messages posted on personal online sites cannot be attributed to OBSA and must not appear to be endorsed by or originated from the Association. All OBSA employees, directors, coaches, athletes, officials, volunteers and Members of OBSA are encouraged to include a disclaimer similar to the following on your personal blog, blog posting, or website: **"The opinions expressed on this [blog; website] are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Ontario Bobsleigh Skeleton Association. The posts on this blog are provided 'as is' with no warranties and confer no rights"**.

### 4. Personal Responsibility

You are personally responsible for the content of your blogs and social media posts, both professional and personal. You can be held personally liable for any content deemed to be defamatory, obscene or offensive, proprietary or libelous. For these reasons, you should exercise caution with regard to exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted material, legal conclusions and derogatory remarks or characterizations.

### 5. Local Policies and Customs

Always keep in mind that social media is not contained to geographic boundaries and content that may be acceptable in some regions may be offensive in others. All OBSA employees, directors, coaches, athletes, officials, volunteers, and Members of Ontario Bobsleigh Skeleton Association will comply with and adopt regional or country-specific social media policies (as long as the requirements do not violate Canadian law).

### 6. Issue and Crisis Response

Should an OBSA employee, director, coach, athlete, official, volunteer, or Member of OBSA become involved in an issue or crisis situation, there are certain rules of engagement during crisis response that need to be taken into consideration.

Regardless whether the situation occurs offline or on, all OBSA-related information, events, or situations are confidential and internal only until formally announced to the public by the communications department or President. Only the communications department or President, should conduct all discussions or communications about such events. Even when the information is public, you must consider whether any comment you make is appropriate.

If the online issue or crisis is of a personal or professional nature, deleting a post or blocking a user can often escalate the issue rather than solve it. If you see a comment, post, or content that you feel is inappropriate or poses a risk either to yourself, OBSA, a fellow athlete, our sport or relationships with our sponsors and funding partners, please bring it to the attention of the communications manager or President for appropriate direction.

### 6. Imposing Disciplinary Sanctions

An individual that uses social media irresponsibly or disrespectfully in a manner that may bring OBSA into disrepute and/or is contrary to the standards of conduct for messaging and posting set above will be subject to discipline internally from the Board of Directors. Indiscretions through social media are subject to the same discipline if an individual made similar damaging comments or actions in a public forum or in front of a camera or microphone.

The behaviour that is already expected by all OBSA members is also expected in social media. Failure to meet this expectation will be dealt with through the provisions of OBSA Code of Conduct.

Disciplinary sanctions will reflect the seriousness of the infraction. Minor infractions are single, largely unintentional breaches of this policy that generally do not result in harm to individuals and/or Ontario Bobsleigh Skeleton Association. Major infractions are either single breaches of significance or repeated multiple breaches that violate the Association's Code of Conduct and that result, or have the potential to result, in harm to individuals and/or OBSA.

Disciplinary sanctions for minor infractions may include the following:

- Immediate removal and retraction of messages in question;
- Verbal or written reprimands;
- A verbal or written apology; and/or
- Any other similar sanction considered appropriate relative to the breach.

Disciplinary sanctions for major infractions correspond to those in the OBSA Code of Conduct and may include the following:

- Immediate removal and retraction of messages in question;
- Formal, written notification of the nature of the violation against the Code of Conduct;
- Verbal or written apologies;
- Written reprimand;
- Probation or suspension;
- Monetary fine or payment of costs; and/or
- Any other sanction considered appropriate relative to the seriousness of the breach. Procedures for dealing with minor infractions will be informal. Procedures for dealing with major infractions will be formal as per the Code of Conduct.

Any individual may appeal the decision of infraction and its disciplinary sanctions by following the Appeals Procedure established by OBSA.

**Disciplinary sanctions imposed internally by Ontario Bobsleigh Skeleton Association do not preclude legal action that may be taken against an individual using social media irresponsibly. Moreover, in the event that any third party claims are brought against OBSA as a result of your unlawful blogging or social media activity, you will be held responsible for any costs or damages it incurs as a result.**

### **C. Additional Pertinent Information**

This Social Media & Social Networking Policy is meant to cover existing and emergent online tools and network options.

### **D. Policy Implementation**

The Board of Directors, President and Communications Manager have shared responsibility and accountability to implement and enforce this policy.