

CBA Alberta Social Media and Online Discussion Tool Policy

Purpose

This policy provides modernized guidelines for the use of social media, discussion groups, and listservs by CBA Alberta members, volunteers, and employees. It seeks to:

- protect the integrity of the legal profession;
- align with the CBA's Social Media and Discussion Board Policy (the "National Policy") and the CBA's Principles of Conduct policy; and
- foster constructive and professional engagement.

Application

This policy applies to all digital platforms, including social media channels and discussion boards, whether used for official CBA Alberta activities or personal purposes where the CBA Alberta may be implicated.

This policy is supplemental to the National Policy and where there are any inconsistencies, the National Policy shall prevail.

1. Guiding principles

- a) **Professionalism:** Maintain conduct consistent with the ethical obligations of legal professionals and the CBA's Principles of Conduct policy.
- b) **Transparency:** Distinguish personal opinions from official CBA Alberta positions and use disclaimers when appropriate.
- c) **Confidentiality:** Protect sensitive, privileged, or proprietary information.
- d) **Respect:** Ensure interactions are courteous and do not include discriminatory, defamatory, or offensive content.
- e) **Compliance:** Adhere to the CBA's Principles of Conduct policy and applicable laws, including but not limited to those governing defamation, harassment, discrimination, privacy, intellectual property, and competition.

2. Use of official CBA Alberta social media accounts

- a) Only authorized individuals, such as CBA Alberta staff, committee volunteers, or designated spokespersons, may post on official CBA-AB accounts.
- b) Posts must follow CBA Alberta communications protocols and policies. Authorized staff may post without prior approval in urgent situations but must adhere to pre-approved messaging guidelines.
- c) Posts should align with CBA Alberta values, be factual, and enhance the legal profession's reputation.
- d) Avoid contentious topics unless they reflect an approved CBA or CBA Alberta position.
- e) Official CBA Alberta accounts will be monitored by the CBA Alberta staff or designated moderators for compliance and emerging issues. Engagement metrics will be tracked regularly.

3. Personal use of social media

While CBA Alberta members, volunteers and employees are encouraged to use their personal accounts in a constructive manner to amplify the CBA Alberta's work and generate thoughtful dialogue, they are expected to use their personal accounts in a manner that complies with the CBA's Principles of Conduct Policy. Personal accounts must avoid posts that violate professional standards and/or employment obligations.

4. Online Discussion Tools

- a) **Purpose and expectations:** CBA Alberta online discussion tools are provided for members' professional benefit. They foster communication about law, practice, procedure, and legislative developments while maintaining professional standards. They are not to be used for political or commercial purposes.

Discussion boards will be monitored by CBA Alberta staff or designated moderators for compliance and emerging issues.

- b) **Conduct:** Participants must:

- i. Conduct themselves civilly, courteously and respectfully.

- ii. Refrain from personal attacks, persistent off-topic comments, or unlawful content.
- iii. Ensure all posts reflect professionalism and comply with applicable laws, including those related to defamation, discrimination, harassment, copyright, and competition.
- iv. Treat discussion group communications as public and non-confidential.
- v. Comply with CBA's Principles of Conduct policy and all applicable CBA policies and law.

c) Prohibited conduct

- i. Posting defamatory, harassing, discriminatory, abusive, profane, obscene, or unlawful content.
- ii. Falsely impersonating others or engaging in spamming.
- iii. Posting links, attachments or files with destructive features, such as viruses.
- iv. Publishing messages that facilitate anti-competitive behavior or harm the CBA Alberta's reputation.

5. Moderation of Online Discussion Tools

- a) CBA Alberta staff and designated moderators have discretion to delete posts without warning or notice. There is no right of appeal from a decision to delete a post.
- b) CBA Alberta staff or designated moderators who become concerned about a user's conduct may refer that user for further enforcement in accordance with this policy.
- c) **Disclaimer:** The CBA Alberta is not responsible for the opinions or content posted by members or third parties on discussion groups or listservs. These opinions do not reflect the CBA Alberta's policies or views.

6. Use of CBA Alberta branding and intellectual property



- a) **Logo use:** The CBA Alberta logo may only be used on official accounts or with prior written approval. Unauthorized use of the logo or other intellectual property is prohibited.

- b) **Content rights:** By posting material to discussion groups or listservs, participants grant the CBA Alberta and its users a nonexclusive license to display, copy, and use the material.

7. Section and Committee social media and digital platforms

- a) Sections and committees must seek approval to establish social media accounts or discussion groups. Requests should include:
 - i. a content plan outlining topics and posting frequency;
 - ii. designated moderators or staff liaisons for monitoring; and
 - iii. target audiences and objectives.

- b) All requests for approval to establish a social media account or discussion group shall be made to the Executive Director of CBA Alberta or their delegate.

- c) Appeals of the Executive Director's or their delegate's decision to deny a request for approval to establish a social media account or discussion group shall be made to the CBA Alberta Board of Directors whose decisions are final.

8. Compliance

- a) Concerns regarding a user's non-compliance with this policy ("a Complaint") may be referred to the Executive Director or their delegate.

- b) Upon review of a Complaint, the Executive Director or their delegate may, in their discretion:
 - i. Dismiss the complaint without further review; or

- ii. Provide a user the opportunity to show good reason why their rights and privileges under this policy should not be revoked or suspended (the “Response”).
- c) Upon review of a user’s Response, the Executive Director or their delegate may:
 - i. Dismiss the complaint without further review;
 - ii. Suspend the privileges of the user for a determinative period of time; or
 - iii. Revoke the privileges of the user indefinitely.
- d) Appeals of any decision of the Executive Director or their delegate made pursuant to this section shall be made to the CBA Alberta Board of Directors whose decisions are final.

9. Breaches of the CBA’s Principles of Conduct Policy

Any breaches of the CBA’s Principles of Conduct Policy may be referred to the HR Director or other appropriate CBA authorities for review in accordance with that policy.

This policy aims to maintain the CBA Alberta’s reputation and foster a professional, respectful, accessible, and collaborative environment across all digital platforms. For questions or further guidance, contact the Executive Director of CBA Alberta.