

# EVENTING SOUTH AFRICA



**POLICY DOCUMENT**  
**EVENTING SOUTH AFRICA (ESA)**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES**  
**18 JANUARY 2019**

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

- 1.1 Social media has become an important and powerful tool that, if used correctly, provides an opportunity for unprecedented levels of engagement with members, key stakeholders and the general public.
- 1.2 However, the use of social media – in both a personal and professional capacity – has risks attached to it. In particular, social media presents significant risks to the reputation of ESA and its members. ESA is under an obligation to limit and wherever possible avoid those risks.
- 1.3 With this in mind, this Policy regulates your participation on social media, by providing guidelines as to what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable use of these platforms. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that your use of social media does not compromise ESA.
- 1.4 For purposes of this Policy, “**social media**” means any facility for online publication, communication and commentary, including, without limitation, blogs, wikis and platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, and any other forms of communication that may now, and in the future, be classified or generally regarded as social media.
- 1.5 This Policy supersedes any previous Policy.

## 2 SCOPE

2.1 This Policy governs the use of social media by:

- 2.1.1 ESA members, including
  - 2.1.1.1 Athletes;
  - 2.1.1.2 Parents of members where members are minors;
  - 2.1.1.3 Coaches;
  - 2.1.1.4 Committee members;
  - 2.1.1.5 Administrators, officials, coaches and selectors;
- 2.1.2 ESA employees; and
- 2.1.3 Any associated interested persons who have a duty on behalf of ESA.

2.2 This policy applies to:

- 2.2.1 your own content on social media;
- 2.2.2 your private digital content which is intercepted, forwarded or captured as a screenshot and then published on social media.  
and
- 2.2.3 your conduct in the real world which is documented digitally and published on social media

2.3 Breach of this policy may be dealt with under ESA's Code of Conduct and, in serious cases, may result in a disciplinary action.

## 3 IMPORTANT SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Although you are required to read the entire Policy, particular notice should be taken of the following key principles relating to social media.

3.1 **Nothing about social media changes your responsibilities and obligations to ESA.** It does not matter if you are using a private account, a pseudonym account, an anonymous account, or using social media outside of ESA-related events, your obligations in terms of your membership contract with ESA, your employment contract with ESA and/or any other applicable ESA policies, apply equally to your conduct on social media.

3.2 **Remember that it is “published”** – Under South African Law, once **one** other person has seen your content on social media, it is considered

“published content” and can therefore carry the same legal consequences as content that is published in a newspaper or other publication.

- 3.3 **Once it’s out there, it’s out there for good** – Remember that the internet never forgets – what you publish will be around for a long time, so reflect on and edit your content carefully. If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you shouldn’t do it.
- 3.4 **Social Media lacks context and tone** – Humour, irony and sarcasm are often hard to understand without your facial expressions and gestures (even with emoticons and emojis) and can create misunderstandings. Consider what you say carefully and think about how it might be interpreted.
- 3.5 **You have the right to freedom of expression but that right may not unjustifiably infringe on the rights of others** – for example, someone else’s right to a good reputation, dignity or privacy. Before you post something on social media, think about the impact that it could have on other ESA members, employees, ESA itself and the general public.

#### 4 KEY POLICY PRINCIPLES

ESA fosters an open and expressive environment and does not object to, or discourage, the personal use of social media. **However, in using social media, always remember that your relationship with ESA is based on good faith. This means that you should not do anything on social media that may bring the name of ESA into disrepute.**

The following principles outline the conduct that is to be followed when engaging digitally (which includes real world conduct which is documented digitally):

- 4.1 **Respect the law and the rights of others** – The public, your fellow ESA members and/or employees all reflect a diverse set of cultures, values and points of view. Don’t be afraid to be yourself on social media, but do so courteously and respectfully, and be thoughtful about how others may be affected. Don’t upload, post, forward or post a link to any content that:
  - Is offensive, derogatory, defamatory, racist or insulting – for example, calling someone the k-word, a slut or falsely accusing them of theft;

- Amounts to hate speech – hate speech is harmful or hateful content that discriminates on the basis of any of the prohibited grounds such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion;
- Is fraudulent or untrue;
- Is harassing or threatening;
- Is abusive, obscene, pornographic, indecent, lewd, suggestive or otherwise objectionable;
- Is invasive of the privacy of others - before you post anything on social media think about whether the content is yours to share (and be particularly mindful of posting photographs of others without permission); or
- Infringes on intellectual property rights – for example using written content, logos or pictures without permission.

4.2 **Re-tweeting, sharing or liking content** – Even if you did not originate the content, you could potentially be held as responsible for material that you re-tweet, share or like on social media, as if you had published the content yourself.

4.3 **Don't disregard the ESA values** – Do not say or do anything contradictory or in conflict with ESA's values. This includes commenting in an inflammatory or objectionable way on topics such as politics, religion, race, sexual orientation, age, disability or nationality. Don't escalate heated discussions, try to be conciliatory, respectful and quote facts to correct misrepresentations. Never contribute to a discussion if you are angry or upset, return to it later when you can contribute in a calm and rational manner. Avoid using offensive language or doing or saying anything that creates a hostile work environment.

4.4 **Follow the codes and policies** – All of ESA's codes and policies including, but not limited to your employment contract (in the case of employees), SAEF Competitors' Code of Behaviour, the ESA Code of Conduct, the FEI Officials Code of Conduct, FEI Welfare of the Horse and SAEF/SASCOC Codes of Conduct – apply to your online conduct just as much as they apply to your offline behaviour. Make sure you're familiar with them.

4.5 **Promptly clarify statements that are misinterpreted** – Even well-considered statements can create confusion and be misinterpreted. Always monitor the comments your posts may generate and clarify your statement if needed.

- 4.6 **Don't disparage the ESA brand** – While we acknowledge that you may wish to periodically post content on social media about horse riding, you may not comment negatively on social media about ESA, or any of its operations, events, activities or members (whether directly or indirectly).
- 4.7 **Do not air your grievances online** – You may not use your personal social media platforms to air personal grievances regarding ESA, its policies, procedures, Officials, co-workers or otherwise. ESA has well established internal grievance policies and whistle-blowing mechanisms, which can be followed if you have a grievance against the Organisation.
- 4.8 **Use Privacy Settings** – this limits the extent to which your activities are visible and accessible to the public. Be aware that social media platforms frequently modify privacy settings and terms and conditions, so what's private today, might not be private tomorrow. Even if you have maximum privacy controls, never forget the power of a screenshot.
- 4.9 **Don't speak on our behalf and let the experts respond to posts** – No person may use social media in the name of, or on behalf of, ESA without the express permission of the ESA Liaison. At no point are you authorised to engage on behalf of ESA (whether publicly or privately).
- 4.10 **You may not set up a social media account, blog or webpage carrying the ESA identity (any name or Logo)** without the express permission of the ESA Liaison.
- 4.11 **Don't misuse the ESA corporate identity** – Your social media identity, login identity, profile picture, "handle" or username may not use or incorporate the name or logo of ESA or any abbreviated or shortened version of the name. You may also not use the ESA name to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate on social media.
- 4.12 **Do not violate privacy of clients or colleagues** – We take the privacy of members and employees very seriously, and you have an obligation not to violate that privacy. Before you post anything on social media, think about whether the content is yours to share:
- Do not use or discuss any information regarding other ESA members and employees unless you have obtained written consent to do so.
  - Do not discuss fellow ESA members and employees on social media without their permission and ask permission before posting photographs.

- 4.13 **Be truthful and avoid misrepresentations** – Do not say anything that is dishonest, inaccurate or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out, and if you make a mistake, be up-front about the error and correct it quickly. Be particularly mindful not to reflect an inaccurate job title on your LinkedIn profile.
- 4.14 **Be accurate** – In the age of fake news, fact-check all posts, comments and links to ensure they are accurate and true before posting them

**The best advice we can give you is to have fun, but responsibly. Ultimately approach social media in the same way as you approach the “real world”. Use sound judgment and common sense; act with professionalism and integrity, and adhere to the ESA values. Most importantly, always remember that you are an ambassador for ESA – whether you’re on social media or not – and that your conduct on and offline has the potential to cause damage not only to the reputation of ESA, but also to your own reputation and career.**

## **5 COMPLIANCE**

- 5.1 You must co-operate with any investigation by ESA into a breach of this Policy.
- 5.2 You are legally liable for everything you do, say or post on social media. Failure to adhere to this Policy could result in disciplinary action, in accordance with ESA’s Code of Conduct.

## **6 UNCERTAINTY AND QUERIES**

If you are in any way uncertain or unclear as to whether or not you are permitted to post something on social media please contact:

ESA Liaison: [Admin@eventingsa.co.za](mailto:Admin@eventingsa.co.za)

## **7. REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

This Social Media Policy may be amended from time to time, in ESA’s sole and absolute discretion. All members will be informed of any changes.