

# TIPS TO STAY SAFE AND PROFESSIONAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA



## TIP SHEET

In our world today, technology and the internet allow us to function and meet our needs online, from ordering groceries and finding a job to connecting to social groups. Social media helps us connect with other individuals to set up transactions, dates, and networking.

There was a time when individuals could keep their personal and professional lives separate, but with social media, this is becoming more difficult. Along with all the positives, there are concerns when it comes to safety and maintaining professionalism. Using safety features in the apps is not enough to make sure you are protecting yourself. Here are some tips to help you maintain your safety, while putting your best foot forward.

1. Create strong passwords and change them often. Longer passwords are more secure. All of this protects your confidential and private information. You should have different passwords for your different social media accounts and also set and use security answers to sign-in. Another layer of security is to set a password for the device (e.g. cell phone, laptop, and tablet) used to access any social media apps.
2. Be aware and selective of who you are friending/accepting on your social media apps. There is potential for fake accounts that are set up to either gather information about you, use your personal information, or attempt identity theft.
3. Be cautious and investigate before you click a link, whether it is an email, a link that a friend sent you, or something you come across on an app. Oftentimes these unsafe links make you vulnerable to hacking.
4. Be careful what you share on your social media accounts. Once you put something on the internet it is very difficult, or even impossible, to take it back. Potential employers can and will search for you online. Never put anything online that you would be ashamed for your grandparents, parents, or loved ones to see.
5. Keep your sensitive personal information to a minimum. Do not publicly share your address, phone number, financial information, or location. The more you post, the easier it is for your identity to be stolen. When someone has access to your account, they can post anything and you may be unaware of the posts.
6. Always log off from the site/app to make sure your information stays secure. Make sure you know the privacy settings of the social media site and to customize them to meet your needs for safety.

### Being your best self on social media

Keep in mind that often our private social media accounts are seen by our professional connections. Whatever you put out in the world on social media—your favorite TV shows, your humor, your affiliations, your hobbies, or being tagged—is visible to others. Represent yourself in the best light possible.

In today's world, potential employers, colleagues, and friends can and will do a search for you to learn more about you. Always post and share the parts of your life that make you proud. People will often take the limited information they see on your social media and make assumptions about you and your character. Make sure you are giving them the best of yourself, which can lead to opportunities in your professional life.