

Social Media

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources Guideline on use of social media

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources' [Guideline on use of social media](#) is important reading for all employees.

The Guideline on use of social media sets out clear guidance for employees using social media, whether for official departmental business or for personal use.

Like the APS Values and Code of Conduct, this guideline applies at all times to all employees and contractors of the department, whether at home or in the office.

The guideline is supported by a factsheet on [using social media](#) for all employees that discusses the implications of using social media as a Departmental employee.

Code of Conduct

Staff are reminded that when they are engaging online, either at work or at home, they are still governed by The [Public Service Act 1999](#) (the Act). This means that at all times, staff must uphold the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of all Australian Public Service (APS) employees that are expressed in the [APS Code of Conduct](#) (the Code) and Values. The Code may apply whenever there is a connection between the employee's behaviour and its effect on the workplace or employees, the reputation of the department, the APS or the Commonwealth.

An emerging issue within the APS, is suspected misconduct that occurs in connection with the use of social media and social networking sites. Some examples of potential misconduct include:

1. Uploading photos of yourself on a social networking site showing you engaged in inappropriate behaviour or behaving illegally. If you are identifiable as a DAWR employee (e.g. you wear a uniform) you are required to act and behave in a professional manner at all times.
2. Making derogatory comments about your colleagues or managers on a social networking site.
3. Making comments criticising the work of the Department on a social networking site.

If an APS employee is found to have breached the Code, the possible sanctions for breaching the Code of Conduct are:

- termination of employment
- reduction in classification
- reassignment of duties
- reduction in salary by way of fine (which must not be more than 2% of annual salary)
- a reprimand

More than one sanction can be imposed for a breach of the Code.

More information about the Code and how suspected misconduct is managed in the department is available on the [conduct and behaviour](#) page.

The Australian Public Service Commission's [Ethics Advisory Service](#) can also provide guidance on how to apply the Values and Code and strategies and techniques for ethical decision-making in the APS.