

# Social Media Policy

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is committed to open and transparent communication through a variety of methods, including social media. In order to ensure that communications are accurate, consistent, and professional, the PFBC has authorized specific staff members to use social media in an official capacity.

## Purpose

The purpose of the PFBC's official social media platforms is to provide information of public interest, educational materials, event promotions, and other relevant communications to the public and engage with those who choose to interact with the PFBC's official social media pages. We encourage everyone to submit questions, comments, and concerns regarding the posted topics and share the PFBC's information with their personal networks; however, please note that these official social media platforms are moderated online discussion sites. Please read the following policy fully and carefully.

## Comment Removal\*

The PFBC does not discriminate against any views. But we reserve the right to remove or refuse to approve comments or content suggestions that:

1. Are profane, vulgar, or obscene (including the use of any profane or inappropriate language);
2. Express or imply threats of violence;
3. Are illegal or encourage illegal activity;
4. Promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race, creed, age, religion, gender, gender expression, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, ancestry, national origin, physical or mental disability, HIV or AIDS status, or sexual orientation;
5. Constitute harassment or abuse;
6. Promote, foster, or perpetuate bigotry, prejudice, misogyny, defamation, or hatred of any kind;
7. Are commercial solicitation, spam, or link to another website;
8. Compromise public safety;
9. Contain gory or disturbing imagery;
10. Are solicitations, advertisements, or endorsements of any kind;
11. Promote or oppose any person who currently holds a political position and/or is campaigning for election to a political office, or promote or oppose any ballot proposition;
12. Are repetitive ("spam-like") posts, comments, or direct messages by a single user, including repetitive comments published across multiple posts or comment threads;
13. Infringe on copyrights or trademarks;
14. Violate the privacy of another individual;
15. Include phone numbers, email addresses, residential addresses, or similar information; and/or
16. Are unrelated to the post at hand.

Violators of this policy may have their comments or content removed from the PFBC's official social media platforms. After the removal, the violator will be reminded via direct private social media communication (if possible) to be respectful of the comment policy, provided a link to review the comment policy, and encouraged to comment again with respect for this policy. Continued or egregious violations of this policy may prompt the PFBC to further restrict an individual's commenting on official PFBC social media platforms.

This Comment Removal Policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure that its continued use is consistent with its intended purpose as a limited forum.

\*Comment removal guidelines are applicable to all social media posts on PFBC social media platforms including, but not limited to, posts, videos, and photos.

## Disclaimers

1. Activity on all PFBC social media sites is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.
2. Page users engage with the PFBC's social media channels at their own risk and assume responsibility for comments or any information provided.
3. The PFBC is not responsible for the content provided on "related" and "promoted" photographs and videos that are accessible from social media platforms. All viewers should note that these related photographs and videos, and the comments expressed on them, do not reflect the opinions and position of the PFBC or its officers and employees.
4. Please note that social media platforms have their own rules of conduct; therefore, social media platforms may independently remove comments or ban users. The PFBC is not responsible for those actions.
5. Many social media platforms provide non-public routes to contact official PFBC social media accounts; however, please note that those conversations are public records and subject to public records requests.
6. In its sole discretion, the PFBC may create posts on its social media platforms that do not allow for comments from the public.
7. In its sole discretion, the PFBC may use an automated filter that prevents profane, vulgar, or obscene comments from being posted on the PFBC's social media platforms. The PFBC is not responsible for removing, or refusing to approve, comments restricted by the filter.
8. This policy provides social media best practices and requirements and is regularly updated to address changes in the digital space.
9. References to commercial entities, products, services, or nongovernmental organizations or individuals are provided solely for information. These references are not intended to reflect the opinion of the PFBC, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, or its officers or employees concerning the significance, priority, or importance to be given the referenced entity, product, service, or organization. Such references are not an official or personal endorsement of any product, person, or service and may not be quoted or reproduced for the purpose of stating or implying PFBC or Commonwealth endorsement or approval of any product, person, or service.
10. Communications posted on our social media pages will not be construed as satisfying requirements for legal notice or service, shall not be considered official public comment, and shall not be construed as an official request for records pursuant to the Right-to-Know Law.

We recognize that social media is a 24/7 forum, and public comments are welcome at any time. However, given the need to manage our staff resources efficiently, we generally only monitor comments and postings during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST. PFBC staff members may not be able to respond to every question or comment, but they will make an effort to provide pertinent, timely information. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion, please contact the PFBC at [RA-FBSOCIAL1@pa.gov](mailto:RA-FBSOCIAL1@pa.gov).