

## Managing Social Media Risks in Healthcare

Social media has become a widespread influence in nearly all areas of industry, including healthcare. Because of social media's rapid expansion and increasing popularity, healthcare providers can understandably embrace these technologies for marketing, advertising and patient education and engagement. Leveraging social media for these purposes can be beneficial, but it also presents various challenges and risks.

Whether your practice is already using social media or planning to implement a social media strategy, this checklist can help you focus on important risk management considerations.

	Yes	No
Has your practice considered its social media strategy, including the goal of the communication (e.g., education, advertising, etc.), the target audience, and the types of information it will promote?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your practice have an approved policy or set of policies regarding the use of social media, including email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your social media policy specify who is authorised to develop content or engage with comments, and does it outline a detailed plan for content review and approval?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your practice provide training on social media policies as part of new employee orientation and ongoing staff education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all staff members aware of their obligation to exercise extreme caution to maintain patient privacy in all communications, including social media interactions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all staff members aware of the guidance regarding social media set out in the Medical Council's Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have all staff members signed confidentiality agreements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your social media policy include disciplinary actions for policy violations? Are consequences consistent with existing patient privacy and confidentiality policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are staff members trained on the appropriate method for reporting inappropriate use of social media?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does your social media policy outline the appropriate steps for managing negative online reviews or comments and ensure that no instant response be posted without appropriate thought and approval? For more guidance, see Medsec's article: How to handle online negative reviews, available <a href="#">here</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your practice's existing IT security policies and procedures cover social media use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your practice incorporated social media activities into risk assessment and quality improvement initiatives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above was adapted from information published by MedPro. Both Medisec and MedPro share the same core values and we believe in the benefit of sharing knowledge, insights and resources to further our commitment to defend doctors, prevent claims before they happen and to improve patient safety outcomes.

***"This article was originally published in our Medzine on 30 June 2021. The contents of this publication are indicative of current developments and contain guidance on general medico legal queries. It does not constitute and should not be relied upon as definitive legal, clinical or other advice and if you have any specific queries, please contact Medisec for advice"***