

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY: MAG MCSA

22 May 2024

Background

As members of MAG MCSA, we are co-stewards of MCSA properties. It is important to consider how our use of social media platforms can either helpfully foster or cause detrimental effect towards long-term Club stewardship. Our relationship with social media is on-going and changing; its role in society now is not what it was 10 years ago, and is not what it will be like in 10 years time.

In light of this, we offer the following with the request that members habitually reflect, discern and contextualise how their role in MCSA stewardship intersects with their use of social media in an ever-changing technological landscape. Furthermore, we request that members reflect back and consider how to **revise past uses** of social media (e.g. what's archived on members' Facebook account).

Definitions

Social Media

Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas (referred to as "content") in virtual communities and networks using text, voice, images and videos.

Social Media Platform

A Social Media Platform is any website or application which facilitates social media. Examples of popular social media platforms are Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and Snapchat,

Publication: Public vs Private

Publication and 'published content' refers to the posting of content to a social media platform. Content that has been posted should be considered "published" even if it has not been "seen" by someone according to the read indicator mechanisms provided by the platform. Content may be consumed by both the platform and third parties without the knowledge of the publisher.

A Public Publication is the posting of content to a social media platform for consumption by a public audience with no restriction limiting further distribution except where subject to copyright or privacy legislation. A public publication may also include posting content to a limited audience, such as a WhatsApp group, provided there are no expressed restrictions concerning the distribution of the content to other parties and platforms beyond the original audience.

A Private Publication is the posting of content to a social media platform expressly for consumption by a private audience, such as a WhatsApp group, where such content may not be distributed to other parties and platforms without the permission of the group administrator and/or content publisher.

Location Data

Location Data includes property names, maps, tracks, GPS points, directions, access arrangements and gate codes or any other data providing information about access to a property. The terms 'Location Data' and 'Access Information' may be used interchangeably within the context of this policy.

Sensitive Data

Sensitive Data refers to all data subject to the restrictions and guidelines described in this policy. All Location Data that is not officially within the public domain (e.g. official MCSA websites and social media channels) should be classified as Sensitive Data.

Rationale

Social media can be a powerful positive tool for greater interaction, community, and visibility and can be used effectively to achieve the Objects of the MCSA and long-term stewardship of mountaineering spaces and knowledge.

It also has the capacity to cause huge detrimental effects which inhibit the achievement of Objects of the MCSA and long-term stewardship of MCSA properties.

Social media is a complex and in-flux reality, which requires the MCSA to respond with thought, nuance and foresight to keep up with our growing and culturally diverse membership, as well as social media trends, and the implications of fast-changing technology.

The MCSA seeks to proactively encourage our members to use social media platforms responsibly, keeping in mind the MCSA Code of Conduct which calls members to care for themselves, others and the environment.

Thus, the use of social media requires a dynamic of providing both *guides* of behaviour as well as *rules* to ensure that we align with the Objects and Constitution of MCSA, that we protect MCSA members, the integrity of the MCSA, confidential information, mountains, wilderness, endangered species and future access to properties, and that we prevent accidental and/or intentional abuse of MCSA access and privileges.

Current Issues

1. **Association with the MCSA:** Most MCSA members can be linked to the MCSA, and thus represent the MCSA in whatever capacity they post on Social Media Platforms. Users of Social Media can never be absolutely anonymous.
2. **Publication:** Published content can be distributed to and by persons for whom it was not originally intended in a manner beyond the control of the publisher. Thus, all digital content is vulnerable and potentially becomes part of a permanent record in the public domain even if it was intended for a restricted and/or private audience.
3. **Commercial misuse:** Advertising MCSA huts, access and properties for commercial purposes occurs regularly. Influential individuals have also used MCSA WhatsApp groups for advertising purposes.
4. **Sensitive access:** Access to private property is sensitive and intended for private, limited use by the land owner or guests of the land owner. Misuse of social media communicating access information leads to detrimental consequences, such as trespassing. In addition, relationships with owners of the properties we enjoy access to or with our neighbouring properties can be adversely impacted.

5. **Safety concerns:** Location data (which includes maps, tracks, GPS points, directions, gate codes) is sensitive and intended for private, limited use. Misuse may have security implications, including crime and trespassing. This impacts not only members but neighbours and other local landowners.
6. **Drones:** Use of drones has become a problem for privacy, disturbance and conservation. Vultures, eagles and other species are disturbed by the use of drones in wilderness areas. We are the visitors in their space. Ecosystems are fragile and require protection and considerate use. The use of drones may also impact the privacy and policies (and thus our relationships) with landowners and neighbours.

Responsible Behaviour for MCSA Members, Permit Holders and Guests

Please consider the following behaviours which model the club's code of ethics in relation to the use of social media. Given the on-going changing of social media at large, it is impossible for the MCSA to create rules for all current and future scenarios. The Responsible Behaviour and National Rules and Guidelines that follow seek to encourage members to carefully and creatively use social media to further the MCSA's aim to explore, connect, discover and protect.

Care for Self:

- Be mindful of posting while you're still on an excursion. It's a way of announcing your whereabouts which could lead to unwanted consequences (e.g. people know that you're not at home).
- Be mindful of including MCSA properties for any commercial-related content that you create. MCSA is a non-profit organisation. Breaching this could implicate your membership status with MCSA.

Care for Others:

- Be mindful of posting images of others without their explicit consent. It could negatively impact their privacy as well as your relationship with them.
- Be mindful of how your posts can impact the enjoyment of properties by others. For example, information like location data and MCSA-related posts for commercial use can negatively impact properties by causing an increase of trespassing and/or misuse of properties.
- Be mindful of how your posts can impact relationships with neighbouring landowners, with whom on-going good relationship is key for others and you to be able to continue to enjoy access to some MCSA properties. This expression of care includes avoiding the use of drones, which can impact property visitors as well as neighbouring landowners' sense of privacy.

Care for the Environment:

- In addition, drones negatively impact fauna and their habits. This is another reason why to avoid using them.
- Be mindful of how your posts can impact the environment. Images of endangered fauna and flora can lead to poaching and unwanted visitors on properties.
- Posting location data can lead to an increase attempt to visit properties (with or without permits). This puts greater strain on the environments MCSA seeks to protect. Please mitigate against this risk.

- We encourage you to carefully consider what you post and how you frame things so that viewers are well-informed that these properties are private and not to be accessed without permission, which is gained through a limited number of permits or paid MCSA membership.

Social Media Rules for MCSA Members, Permit Holders and Guests

1. No Sensitive Data may be shared on any public social media accounts/platforms. The only exception is the use of instant messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, for the purpose of facilitating arrangements for official and informal meets among MCSA members subject to the definition and use of Private Publication above.
2. No drones are allowed on MCSA properties in any capacity and consequently no drone footage to be shared on any platform. Special exemptions will only be considered with special applications to MCSA which will be decided on by the applicable MCSA section committee. MSAR is exempt from this rule for rescue and rescue training purposes, however the landowners need to be notified in advance of any use.
3. Images of MCSA meets may be posted on social media accounts and MCSA may be tagged in these images, but no Sensitive Data may be shared.
4. No advertising of or use of MCSA properties or huts or access for private commercial gain is permitted.
5. All laws must be adhered to, for example the POPI Act, which legislates the protection and privacy of personal information. Personal information includes names, gender, contact information, opinions of and about the data subject and even photographs. Publishing personal information about anyone without their consent may be a criminal offence.
6. No posting of any photographs of threatened or endangered wildlife (both fauna and flora which may become targets for illegal trade and bushmeat) is permitted.
7. Grievances about the MCSA or any of its committees or members must not be aired online. There are appropriate channels to pursue these matters which may be addressed to the President of the MCSA or MCSA section chairpersons.
8. The right of Freedom of Expression does not permit the unjustifiable infringement of the rights of others.
9. If you have authority to make statements on behalf of the MCSA, the communication must state and outline the detail of this authority in these communications. However, simply stating authority does not remove any potential personal liability for these claims.

Additional Posting Guidelines for MCSA Members, Permit Holders and Guests

- 1 Take into account the above Rules.
- 2 Tag the MCSA in posts. Do not post the location of the property or access details but note that the property access is gained through a limited number of permits or paid MCSA membership.
- 3 Only use the MCSA logo if you have written permission to do so.
- 4 Share experiences and encourage members of the public to go to the mountains!

- 5 Encourage other people through the post to join MCSA meets, highlighting community, conservation, and the focus to explore, discover, connect, protect.
- 6 Include a link to the MCSA websites, and official social media for access further information.
- 7 Do not imply you have the authority to act on behalf of the MCSA and if you so, state the origin of that authority.
- 8 Members must not create, post, or be associated with (i.e. by being in the chain of publication for) or send-on any content that includes any of the following:
 - 8.1 Content that may be used for unlawful purposes, or that aims to assist with unlawful conduct;
 - 8.2 Content that includes any threats of violence or harm of any type or is obscene, violent or pornographic;
 - 8.3 Content that amounts to hate speech i.e. speech that discriminates on prohibited grounds such as gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation;
 - 8.4 Content containing communications or images which may be defamatory or violate the rights of another party;
 - 8.5 Content containing offensive, abusive, harassing or harmful communications;
 - 8.6 Content that is untrue or that is designed to mislead other people;
 - 8.7 Content that discloses private information about the MCSA, its Committees or its members, including but not limited to personal contact information and addresses.
 - 8.8 Content that is detrimental to the MCSA, its committees or Members;
- 9 Members may only take and/or post pictures, video recordings, voice recordings or other recordings of persons if you have permission to do so.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

For Non-Members: Guests and Permit Holders

Consequences for Non-Members who do not abide by the MAG Social Media Guidelines and Rules:

- Any non-member who is found to have contravened the MAG MCSA social media guidelines and policy is required to immediately and permanently delete the post(s).
- Any non-member who is found to have contravened the MAG MCSA social media guidelines and policy will be added to a list which will ensure the permit holder will be refused access to ANY MAG MCSA properties in the future, be it as a permit holder or via membership.
- MAG MCSA will inform all other MCSA sections of the permit holder who has contravened the MAG MCSA social media policy with a recommendation to refuse the permit holder entry to their respective MCSA properties and/or section membership.

For MAG MCSA Members

Consequences for Members who do not abide by the Social Media Guidelines and Rules:

- Any MCSA member who is found to have contravened the MAG MCSA social media guidelines and policy is required to immediately and permanently delete the post(s).
- Any MAG MCSA member who is found to have contravened the MAG MCSA social media guidelines and policy will be issued a warning and advisory that if, in future, the social media policy is contravened again, their membership may be terminated in accordance with point 7.2.2.1 of the MAG MCSA constitution. Any future permit requests to MAG properties will be refused.
- Any MAG MCSA member who is found to have contravened the MAG MCSA social media guidelines and policy a second time may have their MAG MCSA membership terminated in accordance with point 7.2.2.1 of the MAG MCSA constitution. MAG MCSA will inform all other MCSA sections of the MAG MCSA member's termination of membership and will recommend other sections to refuse any future membership application and/or requests for permits to visit MCSA properties.