

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)

No.2019/Sec(Spl)/200/9

New Delhi, dated:30.08.2019

In exercise of the powers conferred under Rule 28 of RPF Rules, 1987 read with Section 8 of the RPF Act, 1957 (as amended time to time), the Director General/RPF hereby issues following Directive.

Directive - 54

Sub: Use of Social Media – Guidelines for RPF personnel.

1. Introduction:

1.1 The social media frame work and guide lines for RPF is intended to regulate the use of social media by RPF personnel but not to restrict them from its usage. This aims at defining broad guide lines for use of social media in the official capacity as well as personal capacity for all the Force members and making them aware of the limitations.

1.2 The use of social media has become a part and parcel of day to day life. No doubt the Social Media, which facilitates as an initiator as well as a receiver, provides great platform to connect individuals. The official usage of the Social Media needs to be monitored and for this purpose, framing of rules is required. Proper and responsible usage of social media would bring RPF much closer to the public and would help in serving them better, but it is possible only when uniform rules of practice is adhered to by the officials/staff while handling the social media.

1.3 The rules to be framed on the usage of the social media in the official dealings, needs the following elements for consideration:

- i) Need of Social Media in the official scenario.
- ii) Which social media platform is suitable for official interaction.
- iii) The rules to govern the usage and engagement of officials in the social media.
- iv) Forming guide lines for interaction.

2. Guidelines for official use of social media –

- i) The use of social media handles and accounts for official purposes should be done strictly through the Official Handles of the RPF by a designated authority only.
- ii) Only official logo should be used as profile photo, not the photo of individual officer.
- iii) The information provided on the social media handle needs to be strictly factual and no opinion or subjective answers to be given during dissemination of information.

- iv) On official social media handles, posting photographs of family members, political views/political quotes/ political opinions/religious views /photos etc. are prohibited.
- v) The official account information must be available to only a few designated officers/staff and should not be in common knowledge in the control room/staff as it would make it easy target for misuse by anyone.
- vi) A Social Media Register to be maintained at all Divisional and HQ level where the designated person dealing with the account in that shift / during particular duty hours should numerate the number of complaints received/ dealt and answered and should sign and handover the same to the next designated person.
- vii) An account of the person handling the official account must be designated so that proper and dedicated training can be given at divisional and HQ level and accountability can be fixed in case of any misuse of the social media handle .
- viii) RPF personnel should not publish, post or release any information that is considered classified/ confidential/sensitive/important/any official communication without proper approval from competent authority.
- ix) If RPF personnel encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, he should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and in no situation must engage in any confrontation on the social media handles.
- x) Any nonofficial communication that is not designated to be on the official handle by the competent authority should not be posted online through these handles.
- xi) CCTV Footages without the designated permission of competent authority are not to be shared with any public/media/unauthorized persons through any social media channels.
- xii) Whether on or off duty, any communication/ information disseminated through the official handle should not violate any law of the country/standard procedures/ guidelines which will be treated as a misconduct.
- xiii) Creation of official account: The official account establishes the identity of RPF online with the domain of the particular Social Media in which the ID is created. The name should be akin to the designation/office (RPF SCR, RPF SC Division, RPF HYB Division etc.) and as far as possible the name should be same on all Social Media Platforms to make it easy for the public to just expect and browse for the official ID of the RPF.
- xiv) It should have strong password and better to have two level security & privacy instructions.
- xv) It is better to have short name as far as possible without any special characters.
- xvi) The official mobile number of the Control Room or of the officer manning the Control Room should be linked/mapped to the social media account. This would help the public to identify/establish the genuineness of the account and also to contact in case of any grievances arose on account of reply/response in the social media.

xvii) RPF Security Help line no. 182 shall be displayed in the official social media accounts.

xviii) The IDs created in favor of RPF offices should be recorded properly and a register has to be maintained for login Ids and passwords. Login and Logout record has to be maintained in the register and the official uploading the final response of the RPF on the social media should make a record in the register about the remark passed/reply given along with the authority which approved the response/reply.

xix) RPF officials should engage on the social media over the official aspects only through the official IDs created on the social media and nothing else. Officials should not resort to post official related comments on their personal IDs, lest they should appear as their personal opinions instead of official or vice versa.

xx) The time taken to post response or the time stipulated to update the information on the websites should be swift and continuous. The Social Media demands instant replies/responses and if the response is delayed the comments would pass on continuously and in case of bad comments, the image of the RPF would be tarnished. Hence a standard set of responses for different scenarios can be maintained and it should be ensured that the reply is posted in time.

xxi) It would be better, if a response is dropped on the Social Media, like 'the matter is being examined/referred/enquired' where it is not possible to offer comments/reply instantly. At least a reply indicating that a reply would be furnished in a day or two or at the earliest should be posted on the social media.

xxii) There should be a mechanism to escalate the issue to next higher level, so that any issue which cannot be resolved at a lower lever can be resolved at next higher level within the department.

xxiii) It is important to ensure that resources and their responsibilities are clearly marked out. It is also important to have internal resources, preferably dedicated teams at Divisional/Zonal HQrs.

xxiv) It is also important to note that since the engagement in social media requires different skills, the RPF personnel identified for the purpose would require orientation & training specifically for the tasks assigned to them.

xxv) The roles and responsibilities of the team responsible for creating, managing and responding on social media platforms must be clearly defined. The team should be aware of legal implications. Sometimes where the action is required to be taken from the RPF side the team should take the responsibility and forward the issue to the appropriate authority for appropriate action as per the demand of the public on the social media. Any serious issue must be brought to the notice of the senior officers.

xxvi) A register has to be maintained where entries about the issues raised shall be entered giving a gist of the issue, duly giving a serial number. The officer who gave the reply shall be accountable for the reply posted on the social media.

xxvii) When any information is shared or guidance given online, it is necessary to ensure that all relevant records are captured, trail is generated and records are managed appropriately. It is important that the rules regarding record keeping and historical data must be adhered to.

xxviii) While using the social media for any official communication the provisions of IT Act 2000 (amended in 2008) and RTI Act must be kept in mind. Any postings/responses on the social media should be strictly made keeping in mind the rules and regulations like rules on personal information, RTI etc.

xxix) Personal information of any individual coming into contact through the ID on social media shall not be disclosed to any other third party.

xxx) The response posted in reply to the posting of the public must be crisp and relevant and should be very polite. No response shall be given if the postings are related to any political issues, instead it should be replied “matter does not pertain to departmental issue”.

xxxi) The participants in any official social media groups such as WhatsApp groups should be confined to designated members only and no private member should be included in the group and the admin has to ensure that the objective of the groups is clearly defined.

xxxii) The information shared on the network would get stored in the servers of the respective service providers, hence it should not be assumed that information posted is not saved/archived/protected.

3. Guidelines for personal use of Social media by RPF Personnel :

A Force personnel, even while on off duty or on leave, does not cease to be a part of the Force and hence should even while operating through the private accounts in social media maintain decorum and ensure that anything i.e post or interact/comment does not violate any law of the land, conduct rules etc. while using the social media accounts in the private capacity and the following guidelines are to be followed :

i) While using the social media through private accounts, no uniform photograph or photographs with arms and ammunition at vital installations, inside Railway Stations with security gadgets/Security Control room exposing the location of any security installation like entry exits, access control devices, CCTVs etc should be posted.

ii) While using the social media accounts in private capacity one may adhere to certain privacy settings ensuring that no personal information / location etc are visible to anyone who is not a part of their social group. Also adding of any unknown person in the social media accounts should be avoided to protect personal data.

iii) While using the social media handles in the private capacity, one may express that the views posted are personal so as to ensure that they are not tagged into official communication.

iv) RPF personnel can keep a disclaimer that “views expressed are personal” permanently in their account information.

- v) RPF Personnel should avoid any views/opinions/comments related to any official communication/matters in the social media accounts privately held and ensure that the account information and content is purely personal.
- vi) RPF personnel are expected to follow the same professional conduct/guidelines online as they would in the workplace, and they are personally liable for anything they post to social media sites and platforms, if it is against code of conduct.
- vii) RPF personnel will be responsible for any post made on their handle account even though such posts are made by their family members or any other acquaintance with or without the knowledge of the concern RPF staff.
- viii) RPF personnel while interacting on social media should protect confidential information and shall not divulge any important official matters which shall not be shared publicly. The same is the case with sensitive information, like in the case of train accidents posting videos on their own on the public media without the consent of the administration should be strictly avoided.
- ix) No Posts to be made which may affect the image of the Force adversely and channels of scrutiny at the Divisional and HQ level to be set to ensure no irresponsible posts are put out on Social Media Handles.
- x) No posts should be made that is likely to create disaffection among Force personnel or may lead to incidents of indiscipline or misconduct. No posts should be made that reflect insubordination or disobedience on part of Force personnel.
- xi) Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. RPF personnel should be aware of such issues before posting any comments.
- xii) It must be ensured that while using the social media through private account any information regarding official information/communication /data/ material/ policy which is not in public domain, should not be shared with anyone who is not authorized and if done, the same shall be treated as a misconduct.
- xiii) While using the private social media handles one must ensure that no political/communal/ anti-government views are shared which would be treated as violation of conduct rules. And not to post political matters of any kind and other subjects which are likely to create ill feelings between communities or agonizes the government.
- xiv) The RPF personnel should refrain from following pages and accounts which can reflect poorly on the individual or the organization and create controversy. No page having seditious content or anti India propaganda should be followed. No post having such content or propaganda should be made, linked or shared.
- xv) While using the private social media handles one may ensure that *real time check-in at locations* may be avoided as it may be a personal threat to the Force personnel and may be misused by mischievous elements.

- xvi) While using the private social media accounts, military movement, real time movements of the personnel of any armed forces, RBI or any cash movements or security personnel must not be posted/shared.
- xvii) The private social media accounts should not be linked to the official social media account by any means of official phone number/ official e-mail id making it susceptible for hacking.
- xviii) Official logo or any other images or iconography on personal social media websites should not be used in the personal account of the RPF personnel.
- xix) RPF personnel should not raise personal grievances related to service conditions on the social media platforms.
- xx) They should not comment on Govt. Administration and policies of the Government and RPF Administration.
- xxi) They should not make any judgmental statements on the social media about any case under trial.
- xxii) They should not disclose place of duty and movement.
- xxiii) They should not take part in online participation in policy campaigns related to Force, against Govt. of India/State.
- xxiv) They should not be part of any religious group.
- xxv) They should not divulge anything about weapons and its operational use.
- xxvi) They should not write Articles on foreign countries containing references to customs and manners of people, topography, economic condition etc. which are likely to cause embarrassment to the government.
- xxvii) Creation of anonymous account and posting/sharing contents against RPF officials, use of personal social media account in work places and viewing of porn/obscene websites in the official systems and posting obscene photographs and videos on official accounts either while on duty or off duty shall amount to misconduct amounting to violation of the RPF Rules.
- xxviii) They should not forward/share any posts on social media which are unbelievable/rumor mongering or likely to incite hatred among communities/social groups.
- xxix) The usage of social media shouldn't interfere with the responsibilities of the RPF official duties. The office computer systems/devices etc. should not be used for personal purposes.

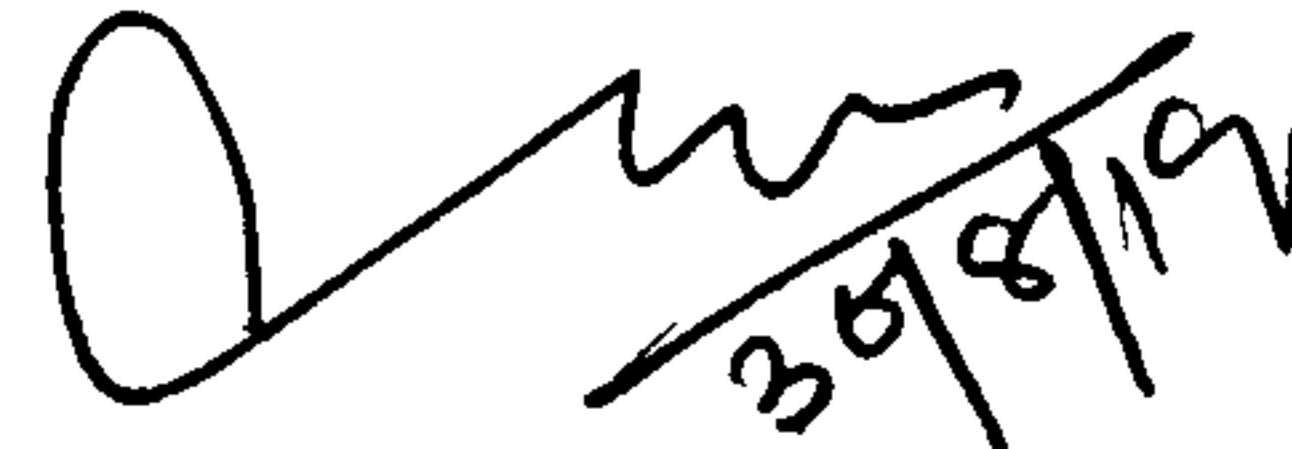
xxx) SIB Field Units should cover usage of personal handles by RPF staff in their intelligence network and report to competent authority of the Division/Zone in case of any violation of the guidelines, RPF Rules, provisions of the IT Act etc.

xxxii) No Force member shall post or forward or comment on videos, which exhibits violence/abuse of children and women/sexual innuendo related matters.

xxxiii) RPF personnel should enlighten their family members about proper usage of social media. Also caution family members not to disclose their operational movements/ share their videos or Photos containing tactical/sensitive location's data etc on social media of the Force Personnel.

xxxiiii) Lastly, social media guidelines should be incorporated as part of basic RPF Training Course similar to Fire Safety and First Aid guide lines.

Guidelines on use of Social Media may be strictly followed by all RPF officers and staff.



(Arun Kumar)
Director General/RPF

Copy to:

Principal Chief Security Commissioners/RPF, All Zonal Railways, ICF, KRCL, CORE, Construction, RDSO & RPSF.

Directors,
JR RPF Academy, Lucknow & RPF Training Centre, Moula-Ali.

(Hindi Version will follow)