

Facebook, Twitter & You're Fired

Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, LinkedIn, etc.) cause new dangers for business owners and workers in the work world. Today, your social media personality can prevent an employer from hiring you. And offensive pictures, posts, tweets, and forum posts can get you fired from your job. In fact 29% of 18 to 34 year-olds say that they have posted a photo, comment, or personal information on social media that they worry could cost them a current or future job. Also, over 70% of employers check a job applicant's social media sites before offering a job.



Do employers have a right to fire a worker for social media posts?

Yes. When an employer is offended, the worker is fired. A few workers are fighting their firing in court, but court case is expensive and often not successful. Social media is a new world. Therefore, courts and employers are now setting new rules about what is allowed and what is not allowed for workers to share, say, and do in social media pictures, posts, tweets, and forum posts. Also, employers now enforce social media policies (rules to follow) that job applicants and new hires must agree to and sign.



Have workers been fired for what they do during non-work hours on Facebook, Twitter, and forums?

Yes. There are many examples of a worker making a dumb social media mistake that cost the worker a job —

- **Office clerk** wrote about her first day on the job in an office: “First day at work. Omg!! So dull!!” The office clerk received termination (you are fired) letter from the manager who was offended by the post.
- **Waitress** at pizza restaurant posted comment about a customer who left a small tip: “Thanks for eating at Brixx, you cheap piece of s__t.” The pizza restaurant manager gave the waitress a termination (you are fired) letter for insulting a customer.
- **Waiter** tweeted about a group of workers who didn't leave a tip after their company's business lunch saying “Shout out to the good people of (name of business) for placing a \$170 order and not leaving a tip!” The tweet included Twitter handle for the group of workers' company, so all in Twitter could give a shout out to the company. This waiter was fired.
- **Sales associate** took time off for a “family emergency,” then posted time stamped pictures of him on vacation. He was fired for lying about reason for taking time off from work.
- **Travel agent** was fired for talking about a coworker saying she wanted to “smack the brown-nosing cow in the face.”
- **Young worker** who was offered high paying job with internet company tweeted: “Cisco just offered me a job! Now I have to weigh getting a fatty paycheck against long daily drive to San Jose and hating the work.” When a Cisco supervisor saw the tweet, young worker was told that she would not have to hate her job anymore since she no longer had job at Cisco.



How can I protect myself from a social media mistake?

- a) Don't post or tweet anything that you would not want a manager to see.
For example, do not complain about your job, your coworkers, your supervisor, or the company on social media sites.
- b) Keep your internet social media personality professional, polite, and squeaky clean.
- c) Set your Facebook privacy settings high. Check to see what the outside world sees when they visit your Facebook page.
- d) Tweets cannot be erased from some websites; therefore, tweets last forever. Be polite, be considerate of others, and be careful.
- e) Do not allow tagged photos to be posted until you review the photos. Allow only close friends to see approved photos.
- f) Look at the apps, groups, and likes on your profile. Does each reflect a business-like image of you?
- g) Don't post anything that may be considered racist, sexist, or discriminatory in any way.
- h) Remember: Your manager may have a right to monitor your social media life outside of work.

**What does a company's social media policy (rules) say I can and cannot do?**

Here is example: "Best Buy's social media policy lists: #1) What you should do; and #2) What you should never disclose. Best Buy adds a comment: If you wonder if you can talk about something you learned at work – DON'T. Follow Best Buy's policies and live the company's values and philosophies (way of doing business). Just in case you ignore the policy, here is what could happen: You could: 1) Get fired. 2) Get Best Buy in legal trouble with customers or investors. 3) Cost us ability to get and keep customers."

The days are gone when a worker's wisecracks and jokes about the job stayed private. The days are here when wisecracks and jokes are re-posted and re-tweeted for millions to read. That is why employers set up policies (rules), and why a worker needs to keep his or her personal social media life professional.

QUICK CHECK:

1. a) What can prevent an employer from hiring you? b) What 4 things can get you fired?
2. What percent of young folks worry that a post on social media could cost them a job?
3. What percent of employers check a job applicant's social media sites before hire?
4. a) When is an employee fired? b) Why is it hard to fight the firing in court? c) What are courts and employers are now setting up? d) What must applicants sign before hire?
5. a) What are 3 words that mean termination? b) Why do you think the manger was offended when office clerk said she was bored?
6. Why did the pizza restaurant manager give the waitress a termination (you are fired) letter?
7. Why was the sales associate fired?
8. Why was the Cisco supervisor offended?
9. To protect you from a social media mistake: a) What should you not post? b) How should you keep your social media personality? c) To what should you set your Facebook privacy? d) How long do tweets last? e) What do you need to do to tagged photos before posting? f) What should your apps, groups, and likes reflect? g) Don't post anything that may be considered what 3 things? h) What may your manager have a right to do?
10. a) What 2 things does Best Buy's social media policy list? b) What 3 things does Best Buy say can happen if you ignore the policy?
11. a) What days are gone? b) What days are here?
12. If you were the supervisor of a grocery store, would you watch your workers' social media sites for offensive behavior? Why or why not?