



MILITARY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY POLICY

# Social Media Guide



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# Social Media Summary

## What is social media?

Social media is another communication channel for service members and families, as well as those who support them, to connect with one another and to give and receive information. These online communication platforms aren't limited by geographic boundaries. They provide a place for our community to share experiences and information and to feel supported.

## Why should you use it?

The Office of Strategic Outreach, Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) works tirelessly to ensure the military community receives valuable information they can use and share with others. One way to share that information is to take it to where our community hangs out online: social media sites. In today's online environment, users filter information and keep what is easily accessible and important to their lifestyle. By bringing resources and information to these online communities, MC&FP provides ease of access in their comfort zones — user-created spaces where they choose the information.

## What does Military Community and Family Policy say about using social media?

MC&FP continuously works to expand its social media reach to meet the needs of a growing audience, and provide excellent resources and information to our service members, families and those who support them while upholding Department of Defense's (DoD) guidelines for social media use. MC&FP has established social media guidelines structured to provide open, interactive social media channels where all users can engage and connect with MC&FP.

MC&FP encourages users to share their opinions on military life issues for military members and families, connect with other fans of their social media channels, and to visit frequently for news and updates.



# Fun Facts about Our Social Media Platforms



## Military Community and Family Policy Channels

### Military Community and Family Policy Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/MCandFP>

Our MC&FP Facebook page shares the latest news and information on programs and policies related to military life as well as information from other DoD agencies and partner organizations such as Sesame Workshop and the United Service Organizations (USO). Come join the almost 12,000 fans of MC&FP.

### Military Community and Family Policy Twitter

[https://twitter.com/MC\\_FP](https://twitter.com/MC_FP)

You can count on MC&FP's Twitter feed for the latest news and information for service members and their families. Look for tweets, retweets and mentions from DoD leadership on quality-of-life issues that matter to you.

### HOMEFRONTConnections

<https://apps.militaryonesource.mil/homefrontconnections>

## Military OneSource Channels

### Military OneSource Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/military.1source>

Our Military OneSource Facebook page is the place to be for military families! Join the nearly 85,000 other Facebook fans and get the latest information from the military community. We also engage with our Facebook fans through fun activities. Come join the fun!

### Military OneSource Twitter

[twitter.com/Military1Source](https://twitter.com/Military1Source)

Have you checked out our Twitter feed? Not only do we provide useful information and resources to the military community, but we have some great activities and conversation!

### Military OneSource Blog Brigade

<https://blog-brigade.militaryonesource.mil>

The Blog Brigade is the place to discover what military spouses are up to around the world. Our bloggers share their twists, turns and



tips through a series of entertaining posts that are bound to leave you energized and ready to meet the challenges of military life. It's military life from a "boots on the ground" perspective. Are you a military spouse blogger? Keep a close eye on our Blog Call page. Every other week, we pick three new writing prompts for guest bloggers. Share your tips with other military spouses by submitting a blog post.

### **Military OneSource Podcasts and iTunes Channel**

[itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/military-onesource/id513904847](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/military-onesource/id513904847)

Did you know that Military OneSource has a dedicated iTunes channel? It's true! Our channel houses a number of podcasts that discuss topics important to service members and families. Don't have iTunes? That's okay! Check out our podcasts via our [Social Media Hub](#) found right on the Military OneSource website.

### **Military OneSource Widgets**

A widget is a Military OneSource application that displays featured content directly on your web page. A widget acts as a doorway or link from your website to Military OneSource. You can embed content in personalized home pages, blogs and other sites. Once you've added the widget, there's no technical maintenance; Military OneSource will update the content automatically.

### **Military OneSource Pinterest**

[pinterest.com/military1source](https://pinterest.com/military1source)

Pinterest is a fun, visual way to bookmark your interests. Our pinboards have images leading to the latest information from Military OneSource, as well as other resources like the Exceptional Family Member Program and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) vacation spots. Check it out for yourself and start pinning.

### **Military OneSource Webinars**

[www.militaryonesource.mil/webinar](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/webinar)

Military OneSource webinars provide an online environment where service members and their families, as well as those who support them, can receive information and ask questions on a variety of topics — right from their own living room.

## **Military Spouse Employment Partnership Channels**

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/MSEPOnline>

Our Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) Facebook page focuses specifically on careers for military spouses. The site offers information on the MSEP program, spouse employment and



career opportunities, career-related articles, and information on Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Hiring Fairs. Don't miss out!

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership Twitter**

<https://twitter.com/MSEPjobs>

Just like our Facebook page, we provide information on everything related to military spouse employment such as current hot job openings, career tips and job fair information. Don't be surprised if you catch us live-tweeting from a Hiring Our Heroes event or from special events related to MSEP. Come see what you're missing!

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership Instagram**

Are you on Instagram? So are we! You can find our feed at "MSEPJobs" for updates from MSEP events.

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership LinkedIn Company Page**

[www.linkedin.com/company/2582897?trk=NUS\\_CMPY\\_TWIT](http://www.linkedin.com/company/2582897?trk=NUS_CMPY_TWIT)

The Military Spouse Employment Partnership Company Page offers updates on the MSEP program, helpful career articles and information on upcoming hiring fairs.

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership LinkedIn Open Group**

[www.linkedin.com/groups/Military-Spouse-Employment-Partnership-MSEP-4159976?trk=myg\\_ugrp\\_ovr](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Military-Spouse-Employment-Partnership-MSEP-4159976?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr)

This LinkedIn group is open to LinkedIn users. Military spouses can search for MSEP positions, read great articles on how to maximize their career potential and find out the latest news from MSEP.

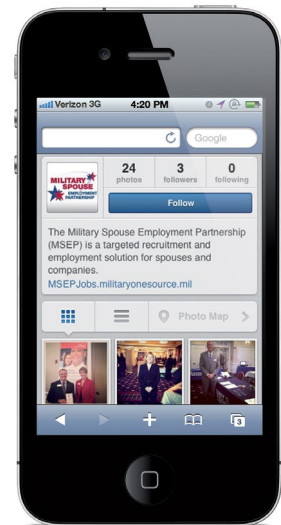
### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership LinkedIn Partner Group**

[www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4445979&trk=myg\\_ugrp\\_ovr](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4445979&trk=myg_ugrp_ovr)

The MSEP Partner group is a closed group where MSEP partners can collaborate and share ideas about MSEP, working to improve processes and outreach.

### **Military Spouse Employment Partnership Storify**

Storify helps MSEP tell stories by combing related stories from our various social media platforms in one place. Be on the lookout for links to our Storify stories.



# Social Media Guidelines

MC&FP social media channels are open, family-friendly forums. Users are asked to keep comments, blogs, pins and wall posts clean. In addition to keeping it family friendly, users are asked to follow MC&FP's posting guidelines. Comments and posts that do not follow these guidelines will be removed:

- MC&FP does not allow profanity, graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions, nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization or institution.
- MC&FP does not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, we do not allow attempts to defame or defraud any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency.
- MC&FP does not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
- Apparent spam will be removed and may cause the author to be blocked from the page without notice.

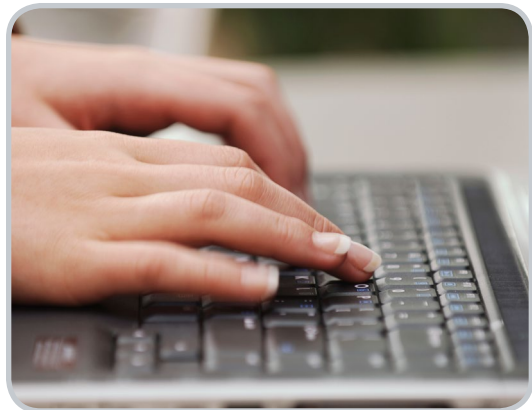
Users participate at their own risk, taking personal responsibility for comments, usernames and any information provided.

For Official Use Only (FOUO), classified, pre-decisional, proprietary or business-sensitive information should never be discussed here. Don't post personnel lists, rosters, organization charts or directories. This is a violation of privacy.

The appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the Department of Defense. MC&FP Public Affairs reserves the right to remove links deemed inappropriate.

Users are encouraged to quote, republish or share any content on MC&FP's social media channels on their own blog, website or other communication/publication with appropriate attribution.

As a fan/follower of MC&FP channels, users take personal responsibility for their comments, username and any information they submit.



# Social Media for Leaders

## Providing information to service providers and organizations

Program managers can coordinate with the MC&FP Office of Military Community Outreach to share important information about their programs with service providers via MC&FP's social media channels. This could include offering webinars or podcasts, establishing a place for providers to collaborate on projects on HOMEFRONTConnections, or raising awareness for new programs and initiatives via Facebook and Twitter — just to name a few options.

## Connecting with service members and families

Social media is about more than passing information. It's also a way to connect the military community in real time. MC&FP uses social media as a tool for fans to receive resources and information, to expand social networks and to be heard. We provide critical tools to help service members and families thrive in the military lifestyle, and we engage our audiences in conversation by always listening for the issues they care about most. Engaging with fans allows them to share their experiences with one another and with us, while having a little fun at the same time. MC&FP offers many ways to engage with fans. Here are a few popular strategies:



**Military OneSource Live Chat** — A Military OneSource Live Chat is a moderated chat hosted on Facebook. Fans of the Military OneSource Facebook page can participate in a wide variety of topics by asking questions and posting comments to the panelist. The panelist is the subject matter expert who answers questions and shares information relevant to the topic.

**Twitter chats** — A Twitter chat is a live, online, topic-driven conversation. The chat is identified by Twitter users via “hashtag.” The hashtag symbol (#) used before a keyword or phrase in a tweet categorizes those tweets and helps people follow the conversation. Twitter chats provide leaders with an opportunity to share information and receive feedback from service members and their families.

**Blog Calls** — A Blog Call is an announcement that solicits posts from military spouse bloggers. Blog Call topics can be specific or broad and can be a great way to gain honest feedback from the military community. The Blog Brigade also solicits military spouse bloggers to write on a variety of topics from a “boots on the ground” perspective.

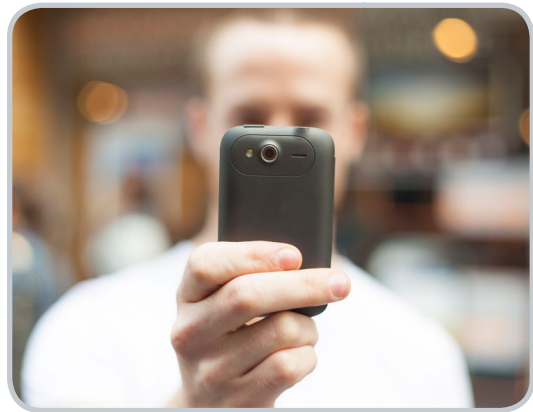


These engagement strategies can increase social connections among service members, families and those who support them, and can serve as a fun way to pass information.

In addition to these ideas, MC&FP has had marked success with audience engagements such as “Fill in the blank Friday” on Military OneSource’s Facebook page, or “Tell us Tuesday” on Military Spouse Employment Partnership’s Facebook page. We have created Pinterest boards featuring “MWR Fun” that highlights fun (or some other adjective) recreation facilities on military installations and another board that highlight tools for Exceptional Families.

## Using social media for crisis communications

Social media has changed the way a crisis unfolds in the media. The eyewitness version reveals itself on social media before events are reported in traditional media. People tweet from the scene or post Instagram pictures before information even hits the newswire. MC&FP ensures that information and resources are reported in real time on our social media channels so that service members, families and service providers receive them quickly. MC&FP will also provide disaster preparedness information before a major event, such as a hurricane, typhoon, volcano, wildfire or other disaster. We encourage you to leverage MC&FP social media capabilities to disseminate information quickly to those who need it most.



## Social media measurement and metrics

Metrics and measurements are your way of listening to the conversation. By measuring the effectiveness of campaigns you’ve shared through social media, you can identify issues important to your audiences and issues that receive lackluster reviews — what works and doesn’t work. You can adjust how you interact with families and market your programs or activities based, in part, on how they were received. It’s a way to increase efficiencies and provide the information and resources your service members and families really want.

# Social Media for Service Members and Families



Social media can provide an integral source of support for service members and families. It provides a way to meet new people, to build camaraderie, and learn and share new information. Social media is 24/7, 365 days a year. You can usually find a connection online any time of the day or night. Social media has created a great way to keep in touch with friends you've met, or who are in your current unit, and it provides another way to stay connected to those back home. Social media can be an excellent virtual community of support.

But like all great things, social media participation does not come without risk. Once something is shared on social media, it never truly goes away — even if you have deleted something you have posted. When using social media, it's important to keep your personal safety and the safety of our service members in mind when sharing information.



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## Operations security

Operational security, or OPSEC, is a way to keep potential adversaries from gaining information that could put you or your service member at risk. General information that may seem unimportant and spread out over time can be pieced together to tell the story of troop movements, missions and the identities of service members and families — a risk that could jeopardize mission security and your safety on the homefront. The following information should not be shared on social media, on the Internet or via mobile device:



### Specific dates

Sharing specific return and arrival dates can help the enemy plan an attack. Instead of sharing specific dates over the phone or on social media, plan a way to exchange dates in “code” before your service member deploys or goes on a temporary duty assignment.

### Location

Sharing your service member's location or potential location jeopardizes personal and unit safety. Remind your service member to turn off the mapping device on their phone when deployed.

### Casualties

If you receive information about casualties in your unit, do not post it on social media. Each Service has a procedure for notifying families in case of injury or for casualties. Ask your unit representative, like the Family Readiness Officer or ombudsman, if you have any questions.

## Social media sharing

### Geotagging and location-based platforms

Geotagging is a GPS-supported feature that reveals your location to other people. It is the basis for many location-based applications like Foursquare and Facebook Places. When you “check in” without your privacy settings locked down, everyone in your network can see where you are.

### Photos and video

Sharing photos and videos on social media also inadvertently reveal more information than you had intended. Photos and videos taken with your mobile phone may have your GPS location embedded. Uploading a picture or video to a social network with this feature turned on can also reveal your location. Most applications allow you to adjust your privacy settings to limit who sees your GPS location.

### “Tagging” in social media

In social media, tagging means that you link back to a person on particular social media network. Essentially you link their name or face in a post, picture or in a location. When you tag a person, their information is revealed in your post if their privacy settings do not block strangers from seeing it. The same is true if they tag you! As a precaution, change your privacy settings to require approval for tags before they become public. Also be respectful of who you tag in your own posts. Always ask the person you are tagging if it is okay to share their information with others.

### Third-party applications

Ultimately, you control what information is shared on social media. However, through third-party applications, such as online games, surveys or plugins for other websites, you might share more information than you originally intended — and with a lot more people. For example, by using Facebook to sign into a website, you could be granting that site permission to collect data when you are not online and to post on your behalf. This functionality can be turned off on most third-party applications in the settings menu.

## Protecting personal privacy

### Protecting passwords

Protecting your online passwords is critical to keeping your personal and financial information safe from predators. When choosing a password consult each platform’s privacy settings to ensure you aren’t sharing personal information with strangers.

### Personal information

Only share personal information online with people you know. Most social media platforms have privacy settings you can implement to



*As a precaution, change your privacy settings to require approval for tags before they become public. Also be respectful of who you tag in your own posts. Always ask the person you are tagging if it is okay to share their information with others.*

block strangers from seeing your personal information. However, most social media platforms default to share your information publicly. Consult each platform's privacy settings to ensure you aren't sharing personal information with strangers. Personal information includes the following:

- phone numbers
- addresses
- schools
- birthdays
- passwords
- financial information
- social security or other identification numbers
- daily travel times and patterns

Safeguarding personal information can help prevent financial and credit fraud, and can help protect you and your family members against unnecessary safety risks.

## Protecting your tech-savvy kids

For kids and teens, social media, online gaming, and Internet and mobile phone usage is part of their everyday routine. Parents can help protect their kids online by ensuring kids understand the risk of social media and by keeping a close eye on kids' online activities.

### Monitoring online behavior

Allowing your child to use the Internet and mobile devices unsupervised can endanger their personal safety and expose them to situations they may be unprepared to handle. Here are some easy tips to monitor your child's online behavior.

**Set expectations up front.** Be clear with your children about your expectations of appropriate Internet and mobile device usage. Establish logical consequences if the rules are broken, and always maintain consistency. Expectations should be consistent with your child's age.

**Keep computers and other devices public.** Limit your child's access to the Internet in public areas of your home like the kitchen or family room. This includes homework time. This will allow you to keep a watchful eye on the screen. The same is true for mobile devices when used for something other than making phone calls.

**Keep electronics public or with you at night.** Have a centralized place, supervised place to charge the family's computers and mobile devices at night. Whether it's an office or a parent's bedroom, keeping these devices in a safe place after bedtime will encourage a good night's rest and discourage risky online behavior after hours.



**Insist on being your child’s “friend” or “follower.”** Insist not only that you be added to your child’s social media account but that you have their online password as well. Social media platforms make it easy to block specific content from people you choose. Keeping your child’s online password will allow you to monitor their content the way they see it online. Another strategy would be to ask a trusted friend of yours to “friend or follow” your child for you — more eyes are better than none.

**Monitor your child’s browsing habits.** Manually check your child’s browsing history or use web-monitoring software to find out what your kids are up to on the Internet. Similar to parental controls on a television, web-monitoring software allows you to block adult content and other inappropriate information.

**Talk to your wireless provider.** Ask your wireless service provider about filtering software or other parental controls that can be installed on wireless devices used by kids.

**Monitor your credit card and wireless billing statements.** Content or application purchases made from a wireless device, and not included in your regular service plan, should appear as a separate item on your wireless bill. Talk to your kids about any unfamiliar wireless or credit card purchases.

## Warning signs of inappropriate online behavior

- ▶ hiding computer CDs and flash drives
- ▶ switching screens quickly when you walk in the room
- ▶ secretiveness
- ▶ changing passwords
- ▶ inappropriate sexual knowledge
- ▶ neglecting school assignments
- ▶ avoiding normal social activities
- ▶ withdrawing from the family to spend time online
- ▶ always-empty Internet browser history
- ▶ receives mail or gifts from someone you don’t know

## Protecting online privacy

### Protecting privacy

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act prohibits social networks from gathering personally identifiable information for minors under age 13, but it's equally important for parents to discourage their kids from willingly sharing personal information in any online environment, particularly with strangers. To help protect your children's personal safety, remind them never to share personal information online.

### Cyber stranger danger

Educate your child on the dangers of online predators and how they can identify them. Instruct your child to never

- arrange to meet someone in person that they have met online
- share photos of themselves online to people they do not know in person
- share personal information
- download images or software from an unknown source — they could be sexually explicit images
- respond to messages or discussion board posts that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent or harassing

### Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying takes place on the Internet but is just as real and just as damaging as being bullied in person. Encourage your kids to

- tell you immediately if they are being bullied online
- always treat others the way they wish to be treated, even online
- never "friend" someone from school who bullies them in person
- block would-be bullies from their social media sites
- know their school's policy on cyber bullying and report students if necessary

### "Friending" strangers in online games or third-party applications

Discourage your kids from playing online games, whether through social media, gaming consoles or mobile devices, with people they have not met in person. Know your gaming system's parental controls, and use them. Never share your parental control password with your child for any reason and change the password every 60 to 90 days.



*Never share your parental control password with your child for any reason and change the password every 60 to 90 days.*

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Children's Online Protection Act of 1998

Department of Defense Social Media User Agreement

## MC&FP Office of Military Community Outreach

Providing policy, tools, and resources to further enhance the quality of life of service members and their families.

