

Remember this while on Facebook and Twitter

As an employee, you have some obligations to your employer that don't always end when you leave the workplace. At the same time, it's in your interest to keep your life outside of work your own as much as possible.

Here are some things to remember when you post to your favourite social media site even when you're in the privacy of your own home, on your own time and using your own account.

Don't badmouth your employer or colleagues. The B.C. Labour Relations Board recently found that the walled garden of Facebook is not private. Everything you post on Facebook or Twitter is considered public, even if it's just between friends, and you may be subject to discipline for comments that appear to affect your ability to do your job (e.g. "I can't work with that idiot, so-and-so" or "I'm so bored/tired/sleepy/frustrated with work"). Don't even joke about it; the Internet is the place irony goes to die. The same is true for Twitter and any other social networking site.

Avoid being Facebook friends with your boss. You should also avoid friending your supervisor or manager on Facebook. You're not friends; you're in a power relationship. It's not really necessary, or advisable, to expose the details of your private life to your boss. If using Facebook is important in your work team, set up a work account.

Don't identify your employer on your personal Facebook page, or Twitter page or blog. This is another strategy to avoid blurring the line between your personal life and your work. It will give you some protection against potential claims you are exploiting your employer for your own gain.

You can blow the whistle on unethical behaviour, but not on Facebook or Twitter (or any other website). Public criticism of your employer is risky business. You have a duty of loyalty under the law.

If you have a concern about something that's going on at work, talk to a union rep about how best to resolve it. If you're bothered about the way your employer is handling something, don't vent online.

Don't release information about your employer that isn't already public. If it's not your job to make public announcements, don't make them. You can get into trouble for revealing proprietary information.

Your work computer is your employer's property. Don't assume that what you do on that computer (or mobile device) is private, even if you're using a non-work account. It's company equipment and they can monitor your computer use. At CBC, their contract says workers can expect respect for their personal privacy and a workspace free of surveillance, unless management has a legitimate reason to monitor you. 😊

