



Operations Security (OPSEC)

One of the best features of social media platforms is the ability to connect people from across the world in spontaneous and interactive ways. Like most things we do as a Navy, social media can present OPSEC risks and challenges, but they can be mitigated. Embrace the risks and challenges by reinforcing OPSEC rules, which are universal and should be maintained online just as they are offline. Make sure your Sailors and Navy civilians as well as their families know that if they wouldn't say it, write it or type it, they shouldn't post it on the internet.

OPSEC violations commonly occur when personnel share information with people they don't know well or if their social media accounts have loose privacy settings. As a Navy leader, carefully consider the level of detail used when posting information anywhere on the internet. Reinforce OPSEC best practices, such as limiting the information your Sailors, Navy civilians and families post about themselves, including names, addresses, birthdates, birthplaces, local towns, schools, etc. It's important to remember small details can be aggregated to reveal significant information that could pose a threat. Work with your public affairs team to ensure best practices and standard operating procedures, addressed in this handbook's section for Navy communicators, are implemented.

Political Activity

Sailors may generally express their personal views about public issues and political candidates on internet sites, including liking or following accounts of a political party or partisan candidate, campaign, group or cause. If the site explicitly or indirectly identifies Sailors as on active duty (e.g., a title on LinkedIn or a Facebook profile photo), then the content needs to clearly and prominently state that the views expressed are the Sailor's own and not those of the U.S. Navy or Department of Defense.

Sailors may not engage in any partisan political activity — such as posting direct links to a political party, campaign, group or cause on social media — which is considered equivalent to distributing literature on behalf of those entities, and is prohibited. Similarly, as a leader, you cannot suggest that others like, friend or follow a political party, campaign, group or cause. Additional information is available at <https://go.usa.gov/xEEqy>.

Endorsements

Navy leaders must not officially endorse or appear to endorse any non-federal entity, event, product, service or enterprise, including membership drives for organizations and fundraising activities. No Sailor may solicit gifts or prizes for command events in any capacity — on duty, off duty or in a personal capacity.

Impersonators

Impostor accounts violate most social media platforms' terms of service. The best offense is a good defense. Regularly search for impostors and report them to the social media site.

The impersonation of a senior Navy official, such as a flag officer or a commanding officer, should also be reported to the Navy Office of Information at 703-614-9154 and navysocialmedia@navy.mil.