**Wreaths Across America Social Media Policy**

*Updated January 2022*

Social media has been one of the driving forces behind the growth of Wreaths Across America since the very beginning and we are always grateful to those who choose to help us share the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach, on social media platforms. It is always fun and educational for us to see the many creative ways our volunteers engage their communities around the mission! As we continue to rapidly grow across the country and social media plays an ever-larger role in the ways we communicate, it has become more important than ever that we take steps to protect the principles and core values this organization was founded on, and ensure that our message is not distorted, corrupted or used in any way that could unintentionally hurt public perception of our mission.

To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media as a Location Coordinator or Sponsorship Group leader, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media.

**Social Media Guidelines**

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, *social media* can mean many things. *Social media* includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including personal profiles on various platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter, as well as forums, groups and messaging apps associated with those platforms, whether affiliated with Wreaths Across America, or not.

The same principles and guidelines found in the Wreaths Across America handbook apply to your activities on social media.

* First, ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online.
* Second, before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved.
* Third, keep in mind that your activities on social media may cause the public to perceive you as an agent of the Wreaths Across America organization and therefore you must proceed with the Wreaths Across America mission in your mind and the knowledge that any of your conduct carries the risk of adversely affecting Wreaths Across America’s brand, and in doing so, its mission.

**Know and follow the rules**

Carefully read these guidelines, and the Locations and Sponsorship Group Handbook, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct. Our work is not affiliated with a religion, a political party or agenda, or any group or association and your postings should reflect that. Postings that do not follow these guidelines will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination of your relationship with the organization.

**Be respectful**

Strive to be fair and courteous to fellow volunteers, Sponsorship Groups or any other individuals you encounter while volunteering on behalf of Wreaths Across America. If you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage fellow volunteers, event attendees, employees, or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone’s reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile environment based on race, sex, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law.

**Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can resurface once removed. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about Wreaths Across America, the organization’s employees, volunteers, or sponsors.

**Post content that is appropriate and respectful of the Wreaths Across America Mission**

Any postings you make from Wreaths Across America branded social media accounts such as Facebook pages, Twitter handles, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts or any others should reflect the Wreaths Across America Mission. We must remember that above all, our work is about veterans, men and women in the armed forces, and military families. Our goal is a consistent and positive message that helps educate the public about the importance of honoring the memories of all who sacrificed their time, their family, their health, and often their lives, to protect the freedoms we enjoy. WAA-branded social media platforms are not to be used for soliciting outside of wreath sponsorships, e.g., selling personal products or promoting non-mission focused events.

In personal postings on your own channels, express only your personal opinions. Do not represent yourself as an official spokesperson for Wreaths Across America. If you need an official statement from the organization in interacting with the public or the media, please contact your liaison and we would be happy to assist you.

**Be sensitive and respect the privacy of others**

In your work for Wreaths Across America, you will meet many people and likely hear very personal stories, ranging from heartwarming to moving to very emotional stories of war experiences and their continuing impact on the lives of veterans and their families. You may wish to share these stories because of their inspirational quality. If so, please seek the permission of the individual. Not everyone is comfortable sharing their story broadly. These are the very people that Wreaths honors through our work, and we want to be sure we never cause harm or emotional distress.

**Be transparent**

If you are speaking about Wreaths Across America, you should be open about the fact that you have a volunteer role within the organization. Your profile on social media sites should describe your volunteer position with the organization. If you are specifically speaking about Wreaths Across America, please include this information in the posting, such as, “As a long-time Wreaths volunteer” or #Wreathsvolunteer

**Speak for yourself**

As noted, your posts should be clear that you are speaking for yourself, not on behalf of Wreaths Across America. Your social media profile should include not only your volunteer position with Wreaths Across America but also a disclaimer that you are speaking for yourself, not for the organization, and that any views expressed are your own. Where a full disclaimer is not feasible, this concept can be expressed succinctly, e.g., “Tweets my own.”

**Be nonpartisan**

As a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3), Wreaths Across America may not engage in any electoral activity, such as endorsing or opposing political candidates. Doing so could cost Wreaths Across America its tax exemption. It is critically important that nothing be posted on a Wreaths Across America-branded channel that is supporting or opposing a political candidate, whether federal, state, or local. Similarly, if you post political content on your personal account while also speaking about Wreaths Across America, please be clear that your political views are your own and are not to be attributed to Wreaths Across America.

**Respect others’ rights to photos and other intellectual property**

Please be careful to post only photos that are publicly available. Posting copyrighted photos that you do not have the right to post can create liability for you. Similarly, be careful about the use of others’ written work, songs, videos, art, logos, and other trademarks. Please link to the original work instead of copying it. Even where photos or other intellectual property are publicly available, appropriate attribution to the original source should be provided.

**Keep confidentiality**

Only public information about Wreaths Across America may be shared on social media. Please do not post any confidential information, such as planned programs, financial data, or details of operations that are not already in the public domain.

**Have fun!**

Social media is a great way to build community, create excitement, and build our national movement. While there are some rules to follow, we very much encourage and appreciate the work you do on social media to spread our shared mission and message and to reach out to those who may not have heard about our work. Your creativity and enthusiasm are contagious and very much appreciated.

**Media contacts**

Occasionally, members of the local media may reach out to your branded social media accounts for more information, or you may wish to conduct outreach to the media using these accounts. You are welcome to provide informational details to these individuals to the best of your abilities, however, please reach out to the public relations team to ensure an official response can be provided by approved spokespeople. Contact the team at pr@wreathsacrossamerica.org/

**Creating new accounts**

We ask that you advise Wreaths Across America headquarters whenever you chose to create new branded social media accounts on behalf of your location or fundraising group. We have a team in place ready to assist you in these efforts and provide assets that may be helpful to you! In addition, it is helpful for our team to be aware of any such accounts to see how our volunteers are carrying out the mission.