Section 7 – Media Interaction

Section 7.1 – Introduction

A member today faces many avenues of media interaction, whether it is through the sharing of information from our website or through social media, a member of this chapter must maintain the highest level of presentation, communication, and interaction. To achieve this goal the following guidelines shall be followed.

Section 7.2 Social Media

TASO acknowledges that on-line social media has become part of our daily communications. The following guidelines are intended to assist TASO members in communicating online in a respectful manner that protects the Mission and Reputation of the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO), the sports officiated by TASO, as well as the many athletes, schools and officials we represent. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort via digital applications or on the internet, including any social network, blog, podcast, journal or diary, personal web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, as well as any other form of electronic communication. The most common forms of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, YouTube and Linkedin.

Section 7.3 Responsibilities

As a member of TASO, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content you should consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved, understanding what is private in the digital world often will become public without your knowledge or consent. TASO strongly encourages all members to carefully review the privacy settings on any social media and networking sites you use and exercise care and good judgment when posting content and information on such sites. These guidelines apply to participation under your name or an assumed identity or avatar.

Section 7.4 Guidelines

Here are a few guidelines when operating on the internet.

1. Read and familiarize yourself with the TASO Social Media policy and Guidelines, as well as all TASO policies. These may be found at www.taso.org/taso-policies.
2. Social media posts and comments must not potentially embarrass TASO, TASO members, TASO Chapters, TASO Divisions, or damage the reputation, or tarnish the image of our members, chapters and Divisions.
3. Never misrepresent yourself or TASO by making false or misleading comments or posts. All statements must be true and accurate.

4. TASO members should refrain from making online comments on any topic related to their officiating assignments or TASO duties. Remember that any social media, print, telephone, written or other form of communication can be made public. Areas to be concerned with include:
    a. Specific game or match assignments, locations or dates. While some of these may be public domain, it is not within the scope of TASO member's authority. Only the Executive Director of TASO, or his/her designate, is authorized by TASO to make statements which may be public.
    b. The scores or outcome of any game or match. This includes penalties or fouls assessed.
    c. Situations or events that occurred in a game or match. Examples would be calls made, interactions with fans, coaches or players.
    d. Do not discuss the officiating performance of other members, partners or officials in any association, sport or level. While discussions with other sports officials may be privately held outside of the event, the topic of a sports official's performance must be specifically kept out of social media. Keep in mind that even a "generic" comment can be identified or misconstrued.
5. Social Media "connections" with coaches, athletic directors, players or any other participants in the sport in which you officiate shall be avoided. Current connections that potentially violate the TASO Conflict of Interest Policy should be reconsidered.
6. Officials shall not accept game assignments from schools where they are "Connected" with a coach or other person which can be considered a conflict of interest.
7. Members shall not create TASO specific Social Media profiles, or represent themselves as official TASO websites, pages or blogs, without the written consent of the executive director of TASO. The executive and/or a designee shall be made aware of any website using the TASO in reference to the Texas Association of Sports Officials.

Section 7.5 Consequences

TASO respects the right of its members to participate in social networking sites and does not discourage self-publishing or self-expression. Members are expected to follow these guidelines and policies to protect TASO, yourself and your privacy. Inappropriate activity that is in conflict with this document's guidelines may result in disciplinary action in accordance with TASO bylaws, ranging from private reprimand to expulsion, and may include fine, probation, suspension, reduction of any classification, or any combination of the above deemed appropriate by the decision-making body. If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact your District Director, or the office of the TASO