

California State Lifeguard Social Media Standard Operating Procedures



September 2015

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Mission and Goals of California State Lifeguard Social Media	2
Definitions.....	3
Lifeguard Social Media Liaison.....	3
Duties	3
Requirements.....	4
Compensation	4
Post Categorization, Generation, and Approval	4
Post Quotas.....	4
Scheduled Posts	4
Event Posts.....	5
Boosted Post	5
Content Guidelines	5
Post Approval Process.....	5
Communication process from the field to the screen.....	6
General Social Media Guidelines	7
Account Administrators and Posting	7
Direct Communication, Comments, and Private Messages:	7
Fans and Followers	8
Personal Social Media Use	8
Liability and Legal.....	8
Social Media Evaluation	8

Introduction

Mission and Goals of California State Lifeguard Social Media

The Mission of California State Parks is to:

“To provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.”

In accordance with the Department’s mission, the number one goal of California State Parks Lifeguards is to prevent drowning events and injury from occurring in our parks. Across the State, Lifeguards in all ranks and park units achieve this through prevention, proactivity, and good communication. Recognizing the growing importance of social media in our culture, this handbook establishes guidelines for the creation and maintenance of State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts, and outlines the duties of the Lifeguard Social Media Liaison who will be in charge of managing these accounts.

The mission of the State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts is to expand State Lifeguard impact in the community, increase public exposure to our diverse and non-traditional lifeguard and junior lifeguard operations, augment the existing reputation of California State Parks Lifeguards across the nation and around the world, and recruit top quality candidates for seasonal and permanent positions in the Department.

These guidelines should be revised often, and updated as new challenges arise and successful systems are implemented. The Department’s Social Media Handbook pre-empts these guidelines, and should be consulted and understood by anyone who is actively working with the State Parks Lifeguard Service social media.

Definitions

Social Media: Various forms of communications, such as text, photos, and video, which allow interaction among individuals, groups and organizations. Social media are primarily Internet- and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information. For government departments, it is another tool to communicate openly with the people we serve.¹

User: Any person who actively posts text, photos, or video on social media Web sites including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia, Blogs and other similar sites currently in existence and those yet to be invented.¹

Account Administrator: A user who has administrative privileges to change account settings, manage communication, and post on behalf of an organization or agency.

Fan / Follower: A user (either employee or member of the public) who has chosen to follow or “Like” the California State Lifeguard social media account or page. A fan or follower will generally see the majority of posts from the California State Lifeguard social media account.

Post: A communication of text, pictures, video, or a combination of all three, on behalf of the department.

Content: The actual substance of the post; the specific words, pictures, and videos to be used in the communication.

Platform: The account to which content is posted. Social Media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Boosted / Sponsored Post: A post or action for which the account administrator pays money to the social media platform in order to increase exposure and impressions.

Lifeguard Social Media Liaison

Duties

The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison will be charged with managing the California State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts in addition to existing district duties. The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison will be the administrator on all Lifeguard Social Media Accounts, and be the focal point for lifeguard social media communication and plan implementation.

¹ “California State Parks Social Media Handbook” – September, 2010. Page 3.

Lifeguard Social Media Liaison duties include but are not limited to:

- Developing a comprehensive social media strategy
- Generating social media content
- Planning and scheduling posts
- Communicating with Permanent and Seasonal Lifeguards, Lifeguard Supervisors, and the Aquatic Specialist for social media content and approval
- Manage a social media marketing budget
- Monitoring and evaluation of social media traffic, impressions, and trends

Requirements

The lifeguard social media liaison will be a Lifeguard (SPPO or Seasonal) who is interested in State Parks Lifeguard presence on social media. Desired qualities for the Lifeguard Social Media Liaison include:

- Excellent communication skills
- Adequate technological skills and working knowledge of the administration of major social media platforms
- The ability to plan and execute short and long term social media plans
- Self-motivating work ethic
- Budgeting skills

Compensation

The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison will be compensated 20 hours per month, and work with the Aquatic Specialist to approve extra hours if special circumstances arise. The Aquatic Specialist will provide the Lifeguard Social Media Liaison with a PCA and Index numbers, and instructions on how to bill Social Media time on the DPR 921.

Post Categorization, Generation, and Approval

Post Quotas

The following percentages indicate the desired division of social media content. These quotas shall be a goal and guideline, and may be adjusted after metrics and evaluation analysis.

25% - Jr. Lifeguard Content

30% - Lifeguard Daily Operations, Event Posts, Stories, Lifeguard History

25% - Drowning Prevention / Water Safety

10% - Parks Showcase

10% - Promotion for Tryouts, Lifeguard Special Events, and Competition Team

Scheduled Posts

A Scheduled Post is a post that has been planned in advance, and programmed strategically into the social media schedule alongside other posts. A scheduled post generally relates to non-time sensitive publishing content that includes the following categories: Jr. Lifeguard Content, Drowning Prevention / Water Safety, Parks Showcase, and Promotion.

Event Posts

An Event Post is a time sensitive post with varying degrees of publishing priority and sensitivity. Event Posts are strictly posts with information about an event or incident that involves State Lifeguards. The goal of an Event Post is to display our lifeguard service in a positive image, communicate the non-traditional nature of lifeguarding in a variety of different State Parks, and communicate important safety information.

Boosted Post

The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison, Aquatic Specialist, and the Department's Social Media Manager from the Communications Division will work together to decide on particular posts to "boost" or pay the social media platform in order to promote that content to a larger audience. Generally, boosted posts should be dedicated to promoting tryouts or newsworthy events that happen with our lifeguards.

Content Guidelines

All Posts shall adhere to the following guidelines, unless specifically approved by a member of the Aquatic Safety Committee:

- Posts that include pictures should include a caption with a description of the picture and the name of the State Park in which it was taken.
- When possible, posts with pictures of any member of the public, car, or vessel shall be taken or edited in such a way to ensure that the victim is unrecognizable, or the license plate, boat name, or CF number is not visible. Photo editing to blur or black out identifying material is appropriate.

Post Content vs. Posting Platforms

The content for Lifeguard Social Media posts will be made public through a variety of different platforms. As of September 15th 2015, California State Lifeguards have an active Facebook account and Youtube Account, with an Instagram account in the works for October 2015. The approval process outlined below refers to post content. Once content is approved, the Lifeguard Social Media Liaison may put it on any or all sanctioned State Lifeguard Social Media accounts, unless specifically indicated by the approver. New social media platforms/accounts must be approved for use by the Aquatic Specialist, and registered with the Social Media Manager in the Communications Division.

Post Approval Process

As an official communication from California State Parks, it is essential that social media content reflect the Department positively, be lawful, and not compromise the integrity or image of the Department. For that reason, Lifeguard Social media content will fall into the following categories for approval purposes.

GREEN: Posts with the following content may be posted by the Lifeguard Social Media Liaison without prior approval:

- Beach and rescue statistics
- Pictures that show large crowds where members of the public cannot be identified
- Pictures taken in a State Park that show a common feature of that park such as a headquarters building, cliff, beach, rocks, sunset, waves, etc.
- Pictures that show a State Parks Lifeguard (of any rank) conducting normal patrol duties or watching the water from a tower not interacting with the public in any capacity.
- General beach safety or drowning prevention information
- Holiday information and beach tips (No Fireworks, Parking, etc.)
- Information regarding weather or surf forecasts

- Re-posting of existing news content from external media that shows or discusses State Lifeguards or beach safety
- Any communication about a major or minor event that comes from a State Parks Press Information Officer
- Information in an official press release from the Department

YELLOW: Posts require the approval of either a Lifeguard Supervisor or someone of a higher rank from the district/sector where the information is coming from, or the Aquatic Specialist.

- Pictures of lifeguards performing rescues or medical aids
- Any junior lifeguard information or pictures sent by the program’s Jr. Lifeguard Coordinator
- Information about a particular rescue or medical aid that involves State Lifeguards
- Any information or pictures from the California State Lifeguard Competition team
- Information or pictures relating to a lifeguard’s work or life outside of State Parks. (Big wave surfers, PhD Candidates, Federal lawyers, award recipients, traveling lifeguards)
- Any content that is primarily focused on State Parks Rangers

RED: Posts require approval from the Aquatic Specialist. If the Aquatic Specialist is not available or does not respond, approval may be granted by any member of the Aquatic Safety Committee.

- Information or pictures from any major incident (Defined as an event that requires a Significant Incident Notification)
- Information or pictures relating to a fatality, Code-X, possible drowning, missing swimmer, search and rescue, multi-casualty incident, mutual aid
- Any information that has a law enforcement element

Communication process from the field to the screen

If a lifeguard or other employee wishes to have something posted on State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts, they should send an email to lifeguardsocialmedia@parks.ca.gov with the following information:

- Subject Line: level of posting priority, short description of content, name of state park (if applicable)
 - “Priority: Plane Down at Bolsa Chica”
 - “Non-Priority: Good rip current video”
 - “Non-Priority: Pictures of huge surf at Blacks”
 - “Priority: Helicopter rock rescue in Santa Cruz”
- Email body:
 - Information with as much detail as possible to be posted
 - Picture(s) with a detailed description that includes the name of the State Park and name of pictured employee(s)
 - Links to news source, webpage, or education content

Ideally this email should come from the Lifeguard (SPPO) Supervisor or someone of a higher rank in that district/sector to mitigate any potential approval hurdles, however anyone can and should send content.

Received content will be sorted based on publishing priority by the Social Media Liaison. Urgent content regarding an event or incident will be edited, approved, and posted in the necessary time frame. Non-urgent content will be created, edited, approved if necessary, and worked into a social media schedule that may be two or three weeks in the future.

General Social Media Guidelines

Guidelines for Gathering Content from the Field

Gathering content for social media at work can be difficult, but is important. Gathering content, taking pictures, or filming shall not interfere with the lifeguard's duty to act in an emergency. If enough personnel are on scene, lifeguards are encouraged to take pictures that can be used by the Department's social media. Posting any footage or other content from work on personal Social Media profiles is strictly prohibited according to the Department's Social Media Handbook. Any content from work must be sent in to the Social Media Liaison and posted from a Department profile. Posting of at work duties, uniformed activities, and materials with a nexus to work must be cleared using this process.

Guidelines for Filming or Gathering Video Footage

Video footage is a great way to show the work that lifeguards do, however there is increased liability that the Department must protect itself from when using video. Lifeguards who are interested in gathering footage at work should communicate with their supervisor and adhere to the following guidelines:

- All video footage from cameras at work of any patrol or rescue activities must be sent to the Social Media Liaison, who will sort and begin the approval process for footage, and eventually post the video on official Department Social Media.
- No footage taken by State Lifeguards on duty may be posted to personal social media platforms, under any circumstances.
- Do not try and capture first person point of view GoPro footage (Camera in the lifeguard's mouth or strapped to the Lifeguard's head) of rescues without communicating with the Social Media Liaison and a SPPO Lifeguard Supervisor. GoPros attached to vehicles/ boats/pwc's / helmets / towers are ok. All uses shall be approved by the appropriate supervisor.

Account Administrators and Posting

There may be more than one account administrator to the State Parks Lifeguard Service social media account, with approval from the Aquatic Specialist. The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison will administer social media accounts via an account that is created with the "lifeguardsocialmedia@parks.ca.gov" email address, not a personal account. Passwords to all social media accounts shall follow policy outlined in the Social Media Handbook, and DOM 1600 Information Technology chapter. Usernames and passwords to social media accounts will be made available to the Aquatic Specialist and Social Media Manager from the Communications Department. No post should be published without the approval of the Lifeguard Social Media Liaison. This is to ensure that social media traffic metrics and impressions are not hindered by conflicting publishing times from existing publishing schedules, or that content that does not fit these guidelines or fit into the larger social media plan is published.

Direct Communication, Comments, and Private Messages:

It is important to remember that direct response twittering and wall-to-wall communications are viewed in public forums. This is not like talking on the phone on a private one-on-one conversation. The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison should always be aware of tone, attitude, and how the communication will be perceived when communicating in public forums from State Parks Lifeguard Service social media accounts. The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison should refrain from participating in dialogue and online discussions with social profile visitors as much as possible, which includes making comments or directly responding to comments from the State Parks Lifeguard Service account.

If a direct question is posed in a comment section or through a private message, the Social Media Liaison may respond and encourage the person to ask their question via email to aquaticsafety@parks.ca.gov.

The Social Media Liaison should constantly monitor comments, disallow/remove any inappropriate or distasteful comment, and use discretion in alerting the Aquatic Specialist and/or a Lifeguard Supervisor regarding sensitive information. State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts shall not be used to create a public forum for rebuttal or controversial issues. All efforts will be taken to mitigate debate or argument in public settings.

Fans and Followers

Any administrator on the State Parks Lifeguard Service Social Media account may not follow private citizens or commercial profiles from within the State Parks Lifeguard social networking profile. Account administrators should not click onto the profiles of Friends, Fans, and/or Followers of the State Parks Lifeguard Service from within the Department account.

Personal Social Media Use

Personal social media profiles have a nexus to the workplace, and the State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts. All administrators should be extremely cognizant of this fact, and exercise caution before posting or sharing content on their personal profiles.

Liability and Legal

Every effort should be taken to foresee the creation of liability in content that is posted on behalf of State Parks Lifeguard social media accounts. It is also important to consider that posts may be used in future lawsuits, and that material that could compromise the Department's position should not be posted.

State Parks Lifeguard Service social media accounts will not be used under any circumstance to discredit allied lifeguard or law enforcement agencies, post sexual/sensual pictures portraying lifeguards, or be used in a way for personal financial or monetary gain.

Social Media Evaluation

The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison will responsible for constant monitoring and evaluation of social media metrics, impressions, and traffic. The Lifeguard Social Media Liaison will review social media metrics with the Aquatic Specialist periodically, and make adjustments in strategy or content if deemed necessary.