

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY SOCIAL MEDIA PROFESSIONALISM GUIDANCE

Permit to Report Requirement

As a candidate for appointment to the United States Naval Academy and a future officer in the Naval Service, you are expected to uphold the Navy's Core Values of **Honor, Courage, and Commitment** in all environments — including online. Social media activity is a reflection of your character, judgment, and suitability to serve as a leader of Sailors and Marines. Your digital presence is subject to the same standards of conduct that apply in person. Online behavior that is inconsistent with Navy values or Department policy may affect your appointment and, once inducted, your standing as a midshipman.

Professional Expectations Online

You are expected to demonstrate sound judgment and professional conduct across all digital platforms, including social media, messaging apps, forums, gaming platforms, and content-sharing sites.

You must NOT post, share, endorse, or engage in content that:

- Promotes extremism, violence, or organizations that advocate unlawful discrimination or overthrow of the U.S. Government
- Is racist, sexist, harassing, hateful, or discriminatory
- Contains sexually explicit, degrading, or exploitative material
- Encourages illegal activity, substance abuse, or unsafe behavior
- Shows conduct unbecoming of a future officer, including hazing, bullying, or humiliation of others
- Discloses sensitive information, personal data of others, or non-public military information
- Impersonates official accounts or suggests you speak on behalf of the Navy, Marine Corps, or USNA without authorization

Engagement includes likes, shares, reposts, comments, tags, and follows.

Digital Footprint Responsibility

Before reporting, you are strongly encouraged to:

- Remove unprofessional or inappropriate content from all accounts
- Review past posts, photos, comments, and tags
- Unfollow or disengage from accounts promoting extremist, hateful, or discrediting behavior
- Adjust privacy settings, understanding they do not guarantee privacy
- Consider how your content would appear on the front page of a newspaper with your name and "Naval Academy" in the headline

There is no true anonymity online. Content can be archived, screenshotted, and traced.

Legal and Regulatory Standards

The **Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)** and Navy regulations apply to service members online as they do offline. Midshipmen may be subject to action under, but not limited to:

- **Article 88** – Contempt toward public officials
- **Article 89** – Disrespect toward superior commissioned officers
- **Article 92** – Failure to obey orders or regulations
- Provisions addressing conduct unbecoming, harassment, and misuse of government information systems

Speech protected for civilians may still violate military standards of good order, discipline, and professionalism.

Operational Security (OPSEC) & Privacy

Never post:

- Training schedules, travel details, security procedures, or facility information
- Personal data of other midshipmen or staff
- Images that reveal restricted areas, access points, badges, or security features

When in doubt, do not post.

Consequences

Failure to maintain appropriate online professionalism may result in:

- Revocation of an offer of appointment
- Conduct action under USNA regulations
- Administrative or disciplinary measures
- Separation from the Naval Academy

Bottom Line

If you would not say it in uniform, in front of your chain of command, or in a professional formation, it does not belong online. Your commission begins with your character — including your digital character.

Acknowledgment

I understand the standards and expectations regarding social media conduct and digital professionalism.

Print Name (Last, First): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____