

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
CABINET SECRETARIAT
ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION

F. No. 14/04/2021-D-II

Islamabad, the 25th August, 2021

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY GOVERNMENT SERVANTS

Kindly refer to this Division's Circular No. 1/20/1976-D-3 dated 23rd July, 2020 whereby detailed instructions under Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1964, governing participation of government servants in different media forums including social media platforms were issued for compliance.

2. Under the Rules *ibid*, no government servant can participate in any media platform except with the express permission of the Government. Rule 18 of the Rules *ibid* bars a government servant from sharing official information or document with a government servant unauthorized to receive it or a private person or press. Further, Rule 22 of the Rules *ibid* refrains a government servant from making any statement of fact or opinion which is capable of embarrassing the Government in any document published or in any communication made to the press or in any public utterance or television programme or radio broadcast delivered by him or her. Furthermore, Rules 21, 25, 25-A and 25-B of the Rules *ibid* bar a government servant from expressing views against ideology and integrity of Pakistan or any government policy or decision. Besides, they also bar a government servant from offering views on any media platform which may either harm the national security or friendly relations with foreign states; or offend public order, decency or morality; or amount to contempt of court or defamation or incitement to an offence; or, propagate sectarian creeds.

3. Despite the aforementioned instructions and the guiding legal frame-work, it has been observed that government servants often engage themselves with social media i.e. websites and applications that enable users to create and share contents or participate in social networking / virtual communities / online groups. They, while using different social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Microblogging etc. to air their views on a host of subjects, sometimes indulge in actions or behaviour that does not conform to the required standards of official conduct, as envisaged in the Rules *ibid*. Such actions range from unauthorized relaying of the official information to disseminating the wrong or misleading information to airing of political or sectarian views etc.

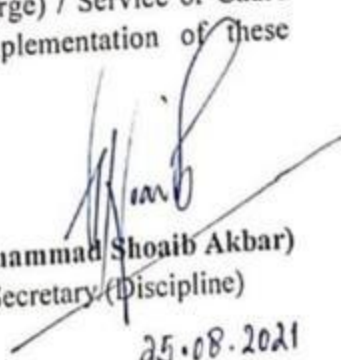
4. In view of the foregoing, it is expedient to issue the following instructions for governing use of social media platforms by government servants:-

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- i. The same instructions as are applicable to government servants while speaking at public fora or publishing articles in print media, shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the use of social media by them.
 - ii. As provided in Rule 18 of the Rules *ibid*, they shall not indulge in unauthorized disclosure of the official information or sharing of the official documents they come across during the course of performing their duties, via social media.
 - iii. In order to maintain their impartiality and objectivity in performance, they shall not partake in any discussion on social media or exchange or forward information or messages that express their opinion on political issues.
 - iv. They shall not participate in furthering of any information especially pertaining to government matters that, *prima facie*, appears to be unauthentic and misleading.
 - v. They shall not make any disparaging remarks aimed at any individual or group or sect or faith and shall uphold values guiding the Civil Service at all times. They are advised to observe discretion and moderation in use of the Social Media and uphold high standards of propriety.

5. It is, however, clarified that the instructions contained at para 4 are not intended to discourage any constructive and positive use of social media by a government organization for engaging with the public to solicit feedback on a government policy, suggestions for improvement in service delivery and resolution of their complaints. However, such an organization shall edit their social media platforms continuously or frequently to remove offensive, inappropriate and objectionable remarks.

6. All government servants are required to comply with the above instructions in letter and spirit. These may, therefore, be circulated to all government servants belonging to all the occupational cadres falling in the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. Violation of one or more of these instructions will tantamount to misconduct and shall invite disciplinary action against the delinquent government servant under Civil Servants (Efficiency and Discipline) Rules, 2020. Further, in case of a violation committed on a group platform, the 'Administrators' or the 'Admin', if they are serving government servants, shall also be liable to the disciplinary proceedings.

7. All Federal Secretaries / Additional Secretaries (Incharge) / Service or Cadre Administrators / Chief Secretaries are requested to ensure implementation of these instructions.


(Dr. Muhammad Shoaib Akbar)
Joint Secretary (Discipline)

25.08.2021

Copy forwarded to:

- i. The President's Secretariat (Public), Islamabad.
- ii. The Prime Minister's Office, Islamabad.
- iii. Chairman, Cabinet Committee on Institutional Reforms.
- iv. All Secretaries/Additional: Secretaries (Incharge) of Federal Ministries / Divisions, Islamabad/Rawalpindi.
- v. The Chief Secretaries, Governments of the Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhawa, Balochistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit- Baltistan.
- vi. The Secretaries (Services), Services & General Administration Department, Government of the Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhawa, Balochistan, Azad, Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit- Baltistan.
- vii. The Chairman NAB, Islamabad.
- viii. The Secretary, Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman)'s Secretariat, Islamabad.
- ix. The Secretary, Federal Tax Ombudsman's Secretariat, Islamabad.
- x. The Auditor General of Pakistan, Islamabad.
- xi. The Accountant General of Pakistan Revenues, Islamabad.
- xii. The Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan, Islamabad.
- xiii. Director General, Intelligence Bureau, Islamabad.
- xiv. DS (CP-V) with the request to publish it on the official website of the Establishment Division, Islamabad


(Tahseen Akbar)
Section Officer D-II