



COLLEGE OF MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGISTS OF MANITOBA

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Use of Social Media Advisory Statement

Social media has become a common means of exchanging and creating information and sharing ideas and pictures. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Myspace, Yelp and Wikipedia. Social media is different from traditional types of media in terms of reach; the speed at which information is shared; the permanence of the information; and the ease at which it is accessed. Once the information is posted, it is rapidly disseminated. Therefore, it is important to recognize the risks of using social media including potential discipline for breaches of patient privacy and for failing to uphold the image of the profession.

Confidentiality:

- Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) are reminded that their Code of Professional Conduct requires them to protect the confidentiality of all patient information. MLTs should never disclose any patient information on social media as any information could be enough for someone to identify the patient.
- Information on social media should only be accessed on a “need to know” basis.
- MLTs must also comply with privacy legislation in Manitoba and their employer policies regarding social media usage.

Professionalism:

- MLTs are also reminded that the Code of Professional Conduct requires them to promote the image and status of the profession by maintaining high standards in their professional practice and through active support of their professional body.
- MLTs have the right to express their own opinion but must be aware that anything posted on social media, even if posted off-duty and off-premises, could undermine their profession and could reflect poorly on their profession.
- MLTs must always maintain professional and ethical conduct when using social media. MLTs should not post derogatory remarks or sensitive information about patients, colleagues, supervisors, the workplace or their regulatory body.
- MLTs should maintain professional boundaries with patients at all times and should be careful when considering “friend requests” from patients.

Guiding Principles:

- The positive aspects of social media usage are to be embraced. However, the sharing of inappropriate information by MLTs on social media may result in potential discipline from their employer and from the CMLTM for violations of their duties of confidentiality and/or professionalism.