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Network Rail begins social media 'clampdown'

There's no doubt social media plays a huge part now in transport and it is an extremely useful way for commuters to get up-to-date information.

With more people using mobile devices, especially commuters, that will only increase.

And there are many different types of employees who use social media to communicate with the public - and punters usually find it very beneficial.

If you are standing on a platform these Twitter feeds usually have quicker and better information than if you went through the official channels.

'Control their message'

There are now also official feeds for transport companies [@chilternrailway](#), [@virgintrains](#) and [@tffofficial](#) for example.

In the main though, many individual accounts of transport employees have been untouched by corporate interference.

Well that's now changing as companies want to control their message and this isn't confined to the transport industry. Most corporations are gradually introducing guidelines.

The latest company to introduce social media guidelines is [Network Rail](#).

Kills spontaneity

They have given them to me (see below). The key phrase: "On non Network Rail social media you must not publish or discuss information not approved for public release."

That sounds like a clampdown and you can expect it to spread through the industry.

The criticism to that usually is that imposing control kills spontaneity which is what makes social media so attractive in the first place.

Network Rail say: "They shouldn't use any information acquired as a result of their position as a Network Rail employee without permission.

"They can retweet something providing that info from NRE or a TOC but they can't give it themselves."

Here are Network Rail's guidelines:

Network Rail employees are encouraged to participate in dialogue on Network Rail social media, e.g. Connect. However on non Network Rail social media you must not publish or discuss information not approved for public release.

Network Rail employees shall not post any confidential information related to our employees, passengers, customers, and suppliers without their permission and in terms of sensitive personal information of others, without prior written consent.

Network Rail employees must not react or respond to negative posts or to a third party's attempt to start a negative conversation about Network Rail.

Avenues of response are the Speak Out Line - [phone number removed], [email address removed], [email address removed], or the IT Help Desk [phone number removed].

Network Rail employees should be aware of mixing personal and professional life in the social media world as lives can easily intersect. Network Rail respects the right for employees to speak freely, but you must remember that other employees, customers and suppliers often have access to the online content you post. Keep this in mind when publishing information online that can be seen by more than friends and family as it can be reposted in an unrestricted environment on other social media. Social media never forgets - once published it is essentially a permanent record. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action. Serious and repeated behaviour will be dealt with accordingly. Employees shall also be required to remove any postings which are deemed to be in breach of this policy and failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.



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