

Social Media Safety Guide



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Protect yourself, maintain your privacy, and
navigate social media confidently.



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Social media connects us to friends, family, and professional networks, but it can also expose us to risks like harassment, scams, stalking, identity theft, or oversharing. This guide helps you understand these risks, take preventive measures, and respond safely when problems arise.



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1. Manage Your Privacy Settings

Privacy settings are your first line of defense—they control who can see your posts, interact with you, or contact you.

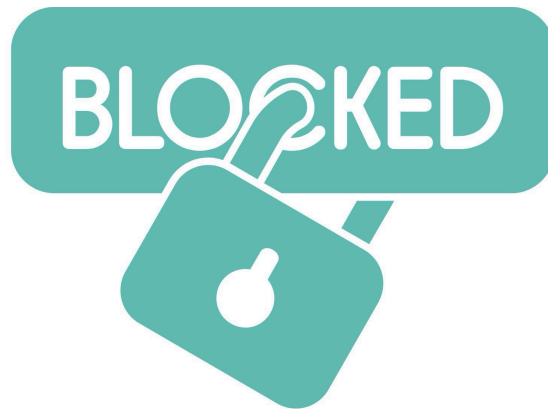
Steps to protect yourself:

- Set strict visibility controls: Limit posts, photos, and personal information to friends, connections, or custom groups rather than public.
- Limit friend requests: Only accept requests from people you know or can verify.
- Disable location sharing: Avoid broadcasting your location in posts, stories, or profile information.
- Check app permissions: Some apps request access to your contacts, photos, or data—grant access only when necessary.
- Regularly review privacy settings: Platforms often update their options, so check monthly to ensure your settings still protect you.

Example: On Instagram, set your account to private and turn off location tags for every post. On LinkedIn, limit profile visibility to your connections only.



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2. Spot and Block Harassers

Unwanted contact can be subtle or aggressive. Recognizing harassment early and taking action can protect your peace of mind.

How to identify harassment:

- Persistent unsolicited messages or comments.
- Abusive or threatening language.
- Attempts to gather personal information or manipulate you.
- Excessive tagging or unwanted sharing of your posts.

Steps to handle it:

- Do not respond—engaging often escalates harassment.
- Block or mute the person immediately.
- Document the behavior with screenshots, timestamps, and message logs.
- Adjust privacy settings to prevent the harasser from contacting you again.

Example: If someone repeatedly tags you in offensive posts, block them, report the content to the platform, and adjust your tagging settings so only trusted friends can tag you.



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3. Report Abuse to Platforms

Social media platforms provide tools to report harassment, impersonation, scams, or inappropriate content. Reporting helps protect you and the wider community.

Steps to report:

- Use the platform's report button on posts, profiles, or messages.
- Include screenshots and details when submitting your report.
- Keep a record of reports and follow up if possible.
- For serious threats, consider contacting law enforcement or a legal advisor.

Example: On Facebook, you can report a harassing comment or block the user at the same time. Instagram allows reporting for bullying, harassment, and impersonation.



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4. Avoid Oversharing Personal Information

Even small details can be used to identify, track, or target you. Protecting your personal information is essential for online safety.

How to avoid oversharing:

- Don't post your phone number, address, daily routines, or travel plans.
- Keep financial information and documents off social media.
- Avoid photos revealing your home, office, or regular locations.
- Keep work and personal accounts separate.

Tip: Think of oversharing like leaving your front door unlocked—anything posted online can be accessed or misused by others.



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5. Maintain Strong Security Practices

Good security habits complement privacy and harassment protections.

- Use strong, unique passwords for each platform.
- Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) to add an extra layer of security.
- Log out of accounts on shared devices.
- Beware of suspicious links—phishing attacks often appear in messages or posts.



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6. Protect Your Emotional Well-Being

Social media abuse can be stressful. Protect your mental health as much as your data:

- Take breaks from platforms when needed.
- Unfollow or mute accounts that create anxiety.
- Talk to friends, family, or professional counselors about harassment experiences.
- Remember: You are not responsible for someone else's abusive behavior.

Key Takeaways

- Your digital space is yours—set boundaries and enforce them.
- Protecting privacy and security is ongoing; check settings regularly.
- Trust your instincts—if someone or something feels unsafe, block, report, and step away.
- Document harassment—evidence is key if you need support or legal action.
- Prioritize emotional self-care alongside technical safety measures.

