

ADVERTISING – INTERNET GUIDELINES UPDATES WITH SOCIAL MEDIA – MORTGAGE PROFESSIONALS

Purpose: Help mortgage brokerage professionals comply with the advertising requirements when using the Internet and social media.

This bulletin applies to all mortgage broker professionals.

The *Real Estate Act* Rules and *Advertising Guidelines* apply to your Internet and social media advertisements, solicitations, and communications regarding your professional services just as it does to any other advertising methods you employ. You must keep any advertising records for a minimum of 3 years or longer if brokerage or other policy dictates.

Tell consumers who you are

In all advertising, you must clearly indicate your brokerage and your name as it appears on your licence. Your websites and webpages must meet the advertising requirements. Your emails, attachments, newsgroups, discussion lists, and bulletin boards must include the requirements at the start or end of each message. Your instant messages, chats, texts, voice over net must meet the requirements unless previously provided in another format (e.g. email, letter). Banner ads must meet the requirements or link to a site that does.

Online information

Your online information must be current and accurate and indicate the last date for revision of the information.

Social media

If you advertise your professional services on social media sites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter, you must use your name as it appears on your licence. This includes your brokerage name. The exception to this is when you use Twitter. Your brokerage name does not need to appear if the message is to attract the public to an advertisement in another location where you clearly indicate the brokerage name. Personal social media profiles do not need to contain your brokerage name if the intent is not to attract business or advertise your professional services.

Email and website addresses

Your email address, website address, or website meta tags must not include a trademark you do not have authorization to use. Meta tags are keywords built into websites that help users find that site. You must not use meta tags to confuse consumers, such as using a competitor's name in your meta tags on your website.

Links and frames

A link is a website graphic or text that takes users to the first page (home page) of another website. A deep link takes users to an interior page of another website. A frame is part of a webpage that displays information from another webpage. You must obtain permission before linking to or framing another website, with the exception of some public sites (government agencies, public libraries).

Text is better for links than graphics, as graphics often involve copyright or trademarks and you must not use them without the owner's permission. You must not represent that your services are those on another website linked to yours. If the link creates the impression that you are participating in or endorsing those services, you may be assuming responsibility for the performance of those services.

Example

A mortgage broker associate creates an elaborate website to attract business. He has read all the books on maximizing consumers to come to his site. One of the ways he has maximized traffic is to insert meta tags in his website so when consumers do an Internet word search his site will appear on the first report page. The words he used include the names of other brokerages, franchises and financial institutions in his market area. This is conduct deserving of sanction.

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[Related information](#)

Legislation

- *Real Estate Act Rules* – sections 65, s.67(b)(c), 69(a)

Guides

- Advertising Guidelines

Information Bulletins

- Advertising – Clearly Indicated
- Advertising – Licensed Name