

**VFW GUIDE FOR  
GETTING STARTED  
AND STAYING ACTIVE  
ON SOCIAL MEDIA**



# GETTING STARTED

Creating a social media presence, such as a Facebook page, an X, formerly Twitter handle or Instagram account allows your Post, District or Department to increase VFW brand awareness and engage with your members, supporters and fellow veterans through an online community where people gather to receive information and access resources.

Social media is useful to share the important work of the VFW, information on meetings and events, creates membership opportunities and works to enhance your Post, District or Department's visibility. It is also a place to share success stories and to ask for support if needed.

Creating a social media presence is not enough however, you must be active! Fully completing your account profile, posting content regularly, engaging with users and responding to direct messages in a timely manner are all vitally important. **Make certain you are assigning a site administrator(s) that you can trust.**

Each social media site is unique in the content it supports and its user base. We encourage you to do some research into the various sites to find the one that suits your Post, District or Department needs. Remember, social media success is contingent upon ENGAGEMENT!

A few questions to consider before choosing which channel is right for you:

- What is this platform's functionality?
- Can we actively and efficiently engage users on this platform?
- How can using this platform help us achieve our goals?

*Please note: VFW Facebook and X profile images are available in the "Getting Started Online" section of the Communications and Public Affairs hub in Training and Support at [vfw.org](http://vfw.org). Brand usage guidelines and instructions on how to access your specific Post, District or Department VFW logo [can be accessed here](#).*

Get to know the channels:

## **Facebook:**

- # of monthly active users: 2.963 billion
- Largest age group: 25-34 (29.9%)
- Gender: 44% female, 56% male
- Time spent per day: 30 minutes

You have the option to control the look of your page by adding a profile picture and a cover photo. Other suggestions include using photos of your Post, District or Department building or photos from recent events.

There are many ways to add content to your Facebook page, but the most common include [status updates](#), creating [events](#) and sharing [photos](#). Please refer to the [Facebook Help Center](#) for more information about each of these.

An official Facebook page may be created with the appropriate permission from your Post, District or Department.

A Facebook page must be created from the profile of an existing Facebook user. If you do not have an existing account, please make one. It is best to create the profile under the name of a real person, then create a Facebook page associated with that profile.

The difference between a profile and a Facebook page is that people must send “Friend Requests” to the profile in order to connect with you. When your Post, District, or Department has a Facebook page, anyone can view the page and connect with and join your audience by following the page and giving the page a “like.”

### **Ready to get started on Facebook?**

Begin creating your official Post, District or Department Facebook page by [following these steps](#). Be sure to create an appropriate name based on your official Post, District or Department name/number. *Note: [Watch what to do](#) if a Facebook page for your entity, for which you do not have access, already exists.*

It is important to add more than one person within your Post, District or Department as administrators of the Facebook page. Be sure they are trusted, and active on their personal Facebook page. This ensures that if the primary administrator leaves, the account will remain accessible, and that Facebook will not deactivate your account by purging the inactive personal account of one of your administrators. Learn how to add an administrator to your page [here](#). Be sure everyone who has access to your page is aware of the guidelines your Post, District or Department has set for their social media activity.

Publicly, we recommend placing a User Code of Conduct in the “About” section of your Facebook page. You are at liberty to copy the VFW National Headquarters’ Facebook User Code of Conduct below:

#### VFW Facebook User Code of Conduct

We strive to provide an inviting space where users can freely and respectfully discuss the content posted to our page. We have instituted user guidelines to help us accomplish this. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in deleted comments. In severe cases, users will be banned from future engagement with the VFW page.

Comments or posts which contain one or more of the qualities listed below will be deleted. Users may be banned if they are deemed excessive or chronic repeat offenders.

- \* Hate speech or bullying
- \* Discrimination
- \* Politically charged rants
- \* Excessive profanity
- \* Sexual content
- \* Content unsuitable for minors (Please remember we have underage fans on our page.)
- \* No promotions or spam: Links, images, referral codes, self-promotion, or excessive references to third parties' products or services
- \* Identifying VFW members in defamatory, abusive, or generally negative terms or endangering their privacy
- \* Deliberately provocative or antagonistic language

Direct messages should also follow the aforementioned guidelines. Messages in violation will not be returned, and depending on the severity of violation could be escalated to our operations or legal departments.

## X:

- # of monthly active users: 436 million
- Largest age group: 25-34 (38.5%)
- Gender: 43.6% female, 56.4% male
- Time spent per day: 34.8 minutes

Twitter formerly rebranded in 2023, changing its name to X. According to the Associated Press' update to its stylebook on the name change, it suggested that "on first reference, refer to the platform as *X*, formerly known as *Twitter*. The term *tweet* remains acceptable as a noun and a verb. Also acceptable is phrasing such as *posted on the X platform, formerly known as Twitter*. On later references to the platform: *the X platform* or *X*." While the rebrand changed the appearance of the platform, users will find that much of the verbiage surrounding the platform is unchanged.

Each tweet is limited to 280 characters for unsubscribed X users, so you must be brief in your messaging. However, those who opt to pay for a X subscription service ([X Premium](#), formerly known as Twitter Blue or [Verified Organizations](#)) now have up to a 25,000-limit character count.

Hashtags are words or phrases preceded by a hash sign (#) used on social media websites and apps especially X, to identify a specific topic. For example, if you tweet, "We're hosting bingo Friday night to benefit #veterans at 7 p.m., everyone is welcome!" using the hashtag #veterans will categorize your tweet with every other tweet using the hashtag #veterans. To see this, enter #veterans in the search bar at the top of the page and you will see a list of all the recent tweets using that hashtag.

While X may have character limitations for unsubscribed X users, with a little creativity you can still share most of the same information with your X followers that you would share on Facebook.

## Ready to get started on X?

[Go to the X “Sign Up” page and follow the prompts.](#) We recommend signing up with a shared email address for your Post, District or Department so that in the event the primary administrator leaves, the credentials are recoverable.

Be sure to create an appropriate name based on your official Post, District or Department name/number, input a proper description of the VFW and note that you’re interested in veterans. Once you’ve successfully signed up, complete your Post, District or Department profile by inputting a photo/VFW logo, completing your physical address, phone number, etc.

Issues signing up? Visit the [X Help Center](#) for a step-by-step guide on how to sign up for your new X account.

## **Instagram:**

- # of monthly active users: 2 billion
- Largest age group: 18-34 (60%)
- Gender: 48.2% female, 51.8% male
- Time spent per day: 30 minutes

Instagram is the perfect combination of Facebook and X, where images and videos are at the forefront, with hashtags often utilized to discover similar content within the captions and comments. Links are not easily added which pushes users to create content that lives specifically on Instagram.

## Ready to get started on Instagram?

Grab your mobile device and download the Instagram app from your app store or head to [Instagram.com](#) to create an account. If you have an existing Facebook or Instagram account, you can use your existing account to create a new Instagram account.

Create an account by choosing an appropriate name based on your official Post, District or Department name/number. Confirm your account by using an email address associated with your Post, District or Department that the administrator and others have access to.

Input an appropriate photo/VFW logo as your profile picture and complete the remainder of the profile with your Post, District or Department information.

If you’ve hit a roadblock, visit the [Instagram Help Center](#) for more information on account basics and how to set up an account.

# STAYING ACTIVE

Maintaining a positive, active social media presence requires that your accounts meet the

community standards set forth by each channel and the administrators take a proactive approach in cultivating your presence and a following.

- Basic Do's
  - Create an official handle with completed profile.
    - This conveys professionalism and accessibility.
  - Provide access to at least two trusted representatives.
    - You do NOT want to get locked out of your account.
  - Always be aware of presentation.
    - Double-check spelling, punctuation and grammar.
  - Post images.
    - Images almost always garner more engagement.
  - Post content regularly.
    - Consistently put the good VFW name out there.
  - Be a good steward.
    - Remember, you're operating under the VFW name.
  - Remain inclusive.
    - Each post should align with the VFW mission, vision and values.
  - Reply in a timely manner.
    - Being responsive conveys professionalism and helps build relationships.
  - Remember it's forever.
    - Post with the assumption that each post is viewed and captured.
  
- Basic Don'ts
  - Use to share your beliefs and opinions.
    - Remember, this is not a personal account.
  - Gloss over appearance.
    - Take a hard look at each photo and video to ensure it's appropriate.
  - Let the profile grow stale.
    - An outdated presence is worse than none.
  - Get personal.
    - Again, remember, you're operating under the VFW name.
  - Ignore or overly engage.
    - Address any negative comments in a professional manner – consider moving the conversation from a public forum to direct messages as necessary.
  - Forget that it's forever.
    - Again, post with the assumption that each post is viewed and captured.

[Learn more about best practices for Facebook.](#)

[Learn more about best practices for X.](#)

[Learn more about best practices for Instagram.](#)

*Please note: VFW National Headquarters does not have a professional relationship with any social media companies. It cannot retrieve login credentials, influence the community standards*

*of each site or submit appeals on behalf of Posts, Districts or Departments whose accounts have been suspended for violations.*

Please refer to the respective social media site for assistance with the aforementioned.

### **Common Hashtags to Use in Your Content Postings:**

The VFW utilizes several different hashtags, and we encourage you to use them as appropriate and utilize your own hashtags in your social media content.




- **#VFWPostPride**
  - o Used to highlight the successes, events and stories of local Posts and VFW members.
- **#StillServing**
  - o The VFW's latest, far-reaching campaign to highlight veterans' continued service.
- **#IAmtheVFW**
  - o Highlighting stories of members' ongoing service to community and country.
- **#VFWTestimony and #AdvocacyInAction**
  - o Incorporated into legislative testimony tweets.
- **#VFWSalute**
  - o Used when remembering someone who has passed away.
- **#ShopVFW**
  - o Anything VFW Store related.
- **#VFWConvention**
  - o Used for all VFW National Convention information.
- **#VFWDC [insert 4-digit calendar year] i.e. #VFWDC2024**
  - o Used for all VFW Legislative Conference information.
- **#FORVETERANS**
  - o Because "No One Does More For Veterans" than the VFW.
- **#PACTActInfo**
  - o Utilized to promote the VFW's PACTActInfo.org website.
- **#VFWStrong**
  - o Emphasizing our strength in numbers and our positive reach in the community.
- **#VFWDayofService**
  - o Annual community service initiative that kicks off the first Saturday in May with service projects and events ongoing throughout the month.

## Determining Which Accounts to Follow/Like



There is much to consider when deciding which accounts to follow/like on social media: Is the information shared reliable, interesting and do our professional interests align ... does it make sense to follow/like them?

To help you get started, we've put together a list of recommended accounts to follow/like. Additionally, we encourage you to follow/like the accounts of your Posts, Districts, Departments, Auxiliaries and those of your local news and resource partners.

### VFW National

-  [VFWFans](#)
-  [VFWHQ](#)
-  [vfwhq](#)

### VFW Membership

-  [VFWMembershipHQ](#)
-  [vfwmembership](#)

### VFW Magazine

-  [VFWmagazine](#)



### VFW Podcast Host (Rob Couture)

-  [RobCoutureVFW](#)



### VFW DC Office

-  [VFW\\_OfficeDC](#)




### VFW Auxiliary National

-  [VFWAuxiliary](#)
-  [vfwauxiliaryhq](#)



### VFW National Home

-  [vfwnationalhome](#)
-  [vfwnhc](#)




### Department of Veterans Affairs

-  [VeteransAffairs](#)
-  [DeptVetAffairs](#)
-  [deptvetaffairs](#)




### Military Times

-  [MilitaryTimesOnline](#)
-  [MilitaryTimes](#)
-  [militarytimes](#)




### Sport Clips Haircuts

-  [SportClipsHaircuts](#)
-  [SportClips](#)
-  [sportclipshaircuts](#)




### Team Red, White & Blue

-  [TeamRWB](#)
-  [teamrwb](#)
-  [teamrwb](#)



### Twisted X

-  [twistedxofficial](#)
-  [twistedxglobal](#)
-  [twistedxofficial](#)

### Student Veterans of America

-  [studentvets](#)
-  [studentvets](#)
-  [studentvets](#)

### Stars and Stripes

-  [stripesmedia](#)
-  [starsandstripes](#)
-  [stripesphotography](#)

### USAA

-  [USAA](#)
-  [USAA](#)
-  [usaa](#)

### Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

-  [dodpaa](#)
-  [dodpaa](#)
-  [dodpaa](#)