

Teaching Your Teens to Be Safe and Smart on Social Media

A message from Liberty Mutual Insurance.

Whether it's on their computers, tablets or smartphones, most teenagers go online multiple times a day. And a lot of that time is spent on various social media networks. In fact, 71% of teens use more than one social network.

Because posts can live online forever, it's better for your teens to learn good habits early. There are various ways you can make sure they are being safe and smart on social media.

Username and password safety

Being safe with passwords and usernames is a great way your teens can protect themselves from things like identity theft or having someone else misuse their accounts.

- Advise your teens to create a username that doesn't contain any personal information such as name, birthday or address.
- Encourage them to create hard-to-guess passwords and to change them regularly to avoid being hacked.
- Remind your teens to log out of sessions on shared computers.
- Advise your teens to stay away from strangers on the Internet, just like in real life. This can help them avoid unwanted and potentially dangerous encounters.

Smart posting

It's important for your teens to have an understanding of the effect their social media posts could have on their lives, including future job searches.

- Encourage them to avoid making inflammatory statements, trolling and bullying.
- A picture that they are tagged in can be seen by people they might not want to see it. If this happens, they should remove the tag or ask the person posting the image to do so.

- An inappropriate photo or post has the potential to go viral, so tell your teen to be thoughtful when posting. If they aren't sure if they should post it or not, don't post it.
- Explain that people can take screenshots of posts, so they could circulate even after they've been deleted.

Managing their privacy

By managing who sees their social media posts, your teens can avoid some unintended consequences at school and in the future.

- Show them how to control privacy settings and who sees their posts.
- They can avoid predators by only accepting invitations from people they know, and allowing only trusted users to add them as a friend or follower.
- Remind them not to post personal information like their social security number or their home location, and to use caution if you go on a family vacation – this helps prevent break-ins while you're away.

Social media is a great way for your teens to stay connected and share experiences. By teaching them best practices, you can help ensure that they get the most out of their online experiences.

Liberty stands with you to keep you protected online, as well as at home and on the road. Get your free, no-obligation quote on Liberty Mutual home and auto insurance by calling 800-809-9778 or visiting LibertyMutual.com/NAR

Source:

<http://www.ncpc.org/topics/internet-safety/social-networking-safety>
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