

DIRECTIVE NO.	CEODIR-2020-007
DATE	FEBRUARY 1, 2020
DATE REVISED	APRIL 18, 2023
SUBJECT	AUTHORIZED BY STATEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS
REFERENCE	N/APP
INTENT	TO CLARIFY DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS
AUDIENCE	CHIEF OFFICIAL AGENTS, FINANCIAL AGENTS

Social media is an important advertising and communications tool for registered political parties and candidates. Section 215 of *The Election Act, 1996* requires that election advertising must contain a statement that indicates that the advertisement has been approved by the registered political party or candidate. Paid promotional advertising, including promoted or sponsored posts, using social media by a registered political party or candidate falls within the definition of advertisement under the Election Act and the disclosure requirements outlined in section 215 apply. Posts to social media platforms for which no amount has been paid to promote are not subject to the requirements outlined in section 215.

For the purposes of this CEO Directive, election advertising done via SMS (i.e., text messaging) is considered to be social media advertising.

Elections Saskatchewan recognizes that it is not always practical or possible for registered political parties and/or candidates to include the authorization statement within certain election advertising on the internet due to the space and character limitations imposed by some message formats (e.g., pay-per-click ads).

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Where possible, social media advertising by a registered political party or candidate political committee should have an authorization statement in visible text and legible font on the advertisement itself.

However, if the social media advertisement is too small for an authorization statement, then the ad must allow the viewer to click on the ad and take the viewer to a website, homepage or landing page that displays the required authorization statement. Examples of social media advertisement deemed too small:

- A paid text advertisement that is 200 characters or less in length;
- A micro-bar; or
- A button ad.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines should be followed to determine the appropriate method to ensure compliance with the authorization requirement for promoted advertisements or click-through ads on social media:

1. For promoted or sponsored posts which are linked to a registered political party or candidate social media account, the authorization statement must be displayed on the profile page in the same social media platform used for the advertisement. For example, if a registered political party pays for a promoted tweet, the authorization statement must be present in the “Bio Section” of the Twitter profile page. If the social media platform is Facebook, the authorization statement must be in the “About Section” of the Facebook profile page.
2. For click-through ads (i.e. right-hand column ads on Facebook) that are not attached to a registered political party or candidate social media account, the authorization requirement can be met by using hover- or mouse-over mechanisms that allow a user to hover over a logo or other image and read the required authorization statement. Alternatively, the authorization requirement can be met by taking the user to an external webpage that contains the authorization statement when the user clicks on the ad. If the external webpage is the registered political party or candidate homepage, the authorization must be visible to the user without having to scroll through the page.

Elections Saskatchewan recommends as good practice to include an authorization statement on all election advertising to ensure compliance with section 215. If you are unsure if an election advertisement requires an authorization, contact Elections Saskatchewan.

OTHER REFERENCES

Registered political parties and candidates should refer to Interpretation Bulletin ESKIB-2019/01 Party vs. Candidate Expenses to determine if an advertisement expense is an expense for the party or the candidate and to Interpretation Bulletin ESKIB-2019/02 Advertising Under Section 215 for further guidance on authorization of advertisements.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael D. Boda'.

MICHAEL D. BODA, D. PHIL., PH.D.
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN
FEBRUARY 1, 2020