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For more information about our services, please call our Salt Lake City office at 801.364.8479 and ask for Terri Braby or email [SaltLakeCity@EmployersCouncil.org](mailto:SaltLakeCity@EmployersCouncil.org).

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## **In Light of the Jemele Hill Controversy, Is Your Social Media Policy Up-to-Date?**

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Last week, SportsCenter news anchor Jemele Hill was suspended by ESPN for violating its social media policy after she posted a "tweet" on her Twitter account about the national anthem controversy, specifically targeting Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones' recent comment. Jerry Jones publicly announced that players who do not stand for the national anthem should not be able to play.

In response to his comment, Ms. Hill tweeted: "This play always work. Change happens when advertisers are impacted. If you feel strongly about JJ's statement, boycott his advertisers." ESPN last updated its social media policy in August 2011. The policy states: "**Think before your** [sic] **tweet**. Understand that at all times you are representing ESPN, and Twitter (as with other social sites) offers the equivalent of a live microphone. Simple rule: If you wouldn't say it on the air or write it in a column, don't post it on any social network." Apparently, ESPN relied on this statement to justify the suspension. Some argue this guideline does not support ESPN's position that Ms. Hill's tweet violated the policy.

The policy also addresses the consequences for violating these guidelines—something employers should always include in any standalone policy. Specifically, the policy states: "Any violation of these guidelines could result in a range of consequences, including, but not limited to, suspension or dismissal."

A few lessons to learn here:

- Make sure your social media policy is up-to-date;
- Although your policy cannot address every instance that may occur, you also want to ensure it is not so vague that it would be difficult to determine whether conduct violates the policy; and
- Be sure your social media policy addresses the consequences for violating the policy.

If your social media policy is outdated, please contact [Employers Council](http://EmployersCouncil.org) so we can assist you in updating it.