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Maharashtra Issues New Social Media Guidelines for Government Employees

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The Maharashtra government has issued a fresh directive restricting its employees from criticising the policies and decisions of the state or central government on social media platforms. This move is part of the state’s efforts to enforce discipline and ensure public servants maintain the integrity of their positions while engaging online.

The new guidelines apply to all state government employees, including those on deputation, contractual staff, and employees of local bodies and public sector units. The directive states that sharing adverse opinions about government decisions online will be treated as a violation of the Maharashtra Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979. Employees found in breach of the rules may face disciplinary action under the Maharashtra Civil Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1979.

The government has also instructed that personnel must use separate social media accounts for personal and official use. Personal accounts must not display government symbols, logos, uniforms, or any association with government properties. Employees are strictly prohibited from posting or forwarding content that is objectionable, defamatory, communal, or discriminatory.

Furthermore, government staff are not allowed to share official documents or confidential information on social media without appropriate authorisation. Only authorised officials may use official accounts to publish or promote government schemes or initiatives, and this too requires prior approval from competent authorities.

The guidelines also mention that messaging platforms like WhatsApp or Telegram may be used for official communication, but not for public outreach or content dissemination. Government staff are instructed not to use apps or websites that have been banned by the state or central government, even for personal use.

In the event of transfer, retirement, or change in designation, employees must ensure that all credentials and control of official social media accounts are properly handed over to their successors.

This circular, issued by the General Administration Department, reflects the state's intent to bring greater accountability and clarity to the digital conduct of its employees. Officials said the move aims to prevent misuse of online platforms and preserve the credibility of the civil service in the digital age.