

From: Katie Johnson
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Hello friends,

These are difficult times indeed and the apparent lack of understanding, empathy, or justice for all people is frustrating to say the least. We know that many of you have been receiving reports and inquiries about racist and hateful remarks being made by members on social media. We've been receiving those complaints, too.

While each comment must be evaluated individually in order to determine the appropriate course of action, we have offered the following guidance to those who've asked for it. We're all trying to figure this out together, so I hope you're willing to share your insights and experiences if you think they'd be helpful for your AE colleagues to hear.

First, if the statement was made on the association's **social media channel**, take steps to remove it timely. NAR does not tolerate hate speech on our social media or other channels. Such messages are removed. We urge all associations, members, and companies to do the same in their channels. Further, members threatening violence should be referred to the authorities. This would also pertain to posts where members are quoting (or attaching images) of hateful speech made by others.

While REALTORS® are encouraged to follow the principles of the **Code of Ethics** in all of their activities, a REALTOR® is subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Ethics only with respect to real estate-related activities and transactions involving the REALTOR®. (See Policy Statement 29 in the [Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual](#).) Therefore, if the statement at issue was made in the context of marketing or delivering real estate services, then the speaker may be subject to a Code of Ethics violation. All Code of Ethics complaints must be filed with the local association where the REALTOR® holds membership.

If the statement at issue was **not** made in the context of real estate activities, then a Code of Ethics complaint would not be available and the association may consider other options.

If the statement was made by an **association leader** (for example, an officer or director), you should consult your bylaws, code of conduct, or other policies pertaining to leader responsibilities. Association leaders have the responsibility to safeguard and promote the interests and welfare of the association and real estate profession. Their failure to do so may be grounds for removal from office pursuant to your bylaws or may result in a violation of other association policies. For example, NAR Leaders must follow NAR's Social Media Guidelines (attached), and failure to do so could result in sanctions.

Consider alerting the member's principal broker to the statement at issue as the broker may want to take action in order to limit business harm.

More and better education is needed. We're advising associations to consider revising their new member orientation and other mandatory education courses to focus specifically on delivering equal services to all. NAR will soon launch an implicit bias training video as part of our Accountability, Culture Change, and Training (ACT) initiative related to fair housing and anti-discrimination. Keep on the lookout for that training opportunity and more. We have not implemented any leadership-specific training but I'm open to the idea! If you have modules or programs to recommend, please send them our way.

Thank you for your respect and understanding as we all work on this together.

Katie