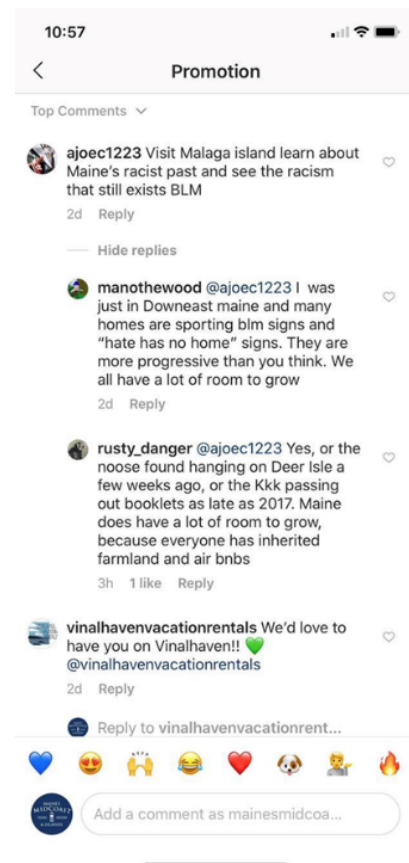# Maine

Social Media Response Best Practices
Last Updated: 7/15/2020

While having an active social media presence for your business or brand can subject you to both positive and negative engagement, the recent happenings of the world, most notably COVID-19 and discussions surrounding social justice, have triggered an influx of negative comments on social platforms of all industries. Because these topics are incredibly important and extremely sensitive in nature, it is important to address comments with consideration, care and respect. Below are helpful guidelines to help navigate through negative comments and reactions:

General Best Practices for Responding to Negative Social Media Comments:

- **Decide how to respond to negative comments on a case-by-case basis.** Most negative comments, even if they're voicing their dislike over the current travel guidelines, for example, are a little different. Some comments may be entirely false and best responded to by sending a link to the most current guidelines, while others are simply venting and don't necessarily require a response.

  Recently, the MidCoast received a comment on Instagram about Maine's history with racism (right). Because the comment was an isolated incident and because another follower came to Maine's "defense," it was appropriate to leave the comment in the thread, but not address it with a comment, and keep a close eye on it. Most often, this back and forth chatter will simply stop. If it becomes too inappropriate, out of hand or overly political in nature, it's okay to remove it (more on this below). It would also be appropriate to comment with, "MidCoast Maine welcomes all visitors and would

love to have you here." You could also use a simple, positive response like this to address folks who comment on Maine's lack of diversity (one of the more frequent comments related to racial justice that the industry might see).

- **Keep tabs if comments are from the same individuals or if they have a recurring theme.** When negative comments keep surfacing from the same people repeatedly, assess the next best step – Should you acknowledge their comment if you haven't? Are their comments inappropriate enough to justify banning them from the page/platform? If the same theme comes up frequently in the comments, draft a standard response that addresses this specific topic.

- **Give yourself the flexibility to delete if a comment warrants it.** As noted above, if a comment becomes too inappropriate, out of hand or overly political in nature, it's okay to remove it. To let people know Visit Maine reserves the right to delete comments, we've included the following line in the About section on Facebook.

  We reserve the right to moderate this page. Offensive and inappropriate comments will be removed at our discretion.

- **Create positive posts.** While tourism businesses and organizations most always are positive and represent the joyful act of traveling, avoid any posts that could be at all considered controversial, remotely offensive or might elicit strong opinions or comments at this time. Lucky for us, Maine is an incredibly beautiful place and photos and simple captions usually perform well on social channels.

- **Use your common sense.** When in doubt, think about the most respectful and kind way to approach a comment. This can include everything from acknowledging their comment with an appropriate response to not addressing it with a comment, but rather keeping a close eye on it for any additional chatter. There is no precise right or wrong when it comes to dealing with negative comments, but being kind and keeping your brand's reputation and wellbeing in mind are techniques to guide your decision.