

CONTRACTORS

Use of drones in quarries – supplement, dealing with the public



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Key Points

Social media has irrevocably changed the way news and views are reported and interpreted.

Apps have created spaces for members of the public, citizen journalists and vloggers to share views. (and in some instances, generate revenue streams via clicks for cash).

Overview

This document provides supplementary information and does not form part of QNJAC guidance.

This is advisory information for dealing with members of the public and is based on information kindly provided by Tarmac and Heidelberg Materials UK.

Public confrontations

Social media has irrevocably changed the way news and views are reported and interpreted.

Channels including YouTube, X, threads, and Facebook etc. have created spaces for members of the public, citizen journalists and vloggers to share experiences. (and in some instances, generate revenue streams via clicks for cash).

Members of the public can also use social media platforms to escalate issues with an organisation.

In an age with ever-higher public expectations of company behaviour, this means that every interaction with a member of the public has the potential to go 'viral'.

- The public is far more likely to share bad experiences than promote good ones.
- There is a risk of reputational or company brand damage via social media 'social bashing' or 'complaintvertising'.
- Every employee needs to be mindful of the role they play as company ambassadors in every public interaction.

What can you do if confronted in this situation.

- Be polite and courteous, make eye contact, smile – “Good Morning!”
- If they are within your site boundary, politely ask them to walk with you to a safe area to talk, outside the site boundary.
- Keep a respectful distance. Close enough to engage, without invading someone's personal space.
- Ask relevant questions and listen to the response.
- Never raise your voice!
- Be clear in your replies so there can be no misunderstanding or misinterpretation.
- Give context: “safety is our number one priority and for that reason I am sorry, but you can't enter our site today. We may be able to arrange a tour at a scheduled time if you make contact with....”
- Remember body language talks. Arms down – not folded or crossed.
- Know when to walk away to get support from colleagues.
- Acknowledge if you are unable to deal with their query – but give options for next steps e.g. “I can take your details so that our site manager can follow up with you...”
- Make sure the right follow up happens.

Remember, industry experience shows that people approaching site in this manner are seeking a confrontation.