



July 27, 2016

Senator Edward Markey
United States Senate
SD-255 Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey,

Thank you for your letter regarding firearm listings on Facebook and Instagram, and for your leadership in protecting the safety of online community members. With a community of more than 1.6 billion people around the world, safety on our platform is a top priority and a responsibility we take seriously. We share your concern about any activity on our platform that violates our Community Standards, including peer-to-peer sales of firearms or explosives, and we are committed to removing this activity from Facebook and Instagram.

As you noted in your letter, we updated our Community Standards in January of this year to explicitly prohibit listings offering peer-to-peer sales of any kind of firearms on Facebook and Instagram. When we become aware of content that is in violation of this standard, it is immediately removed. When we are made aware of content that promotes the private sale of regulated items whether in groups, on profiles, or on pages, it will be deleted. We don't allow people to advertise gun sales, and we do not allow people to post offering to buy, sell, or trade firearms. We do allow stores or online retailers to post about a sale that would take place off of Facebook. Prior to the January 2016 Community Standards update, in 2014 we introduced new educational and enforcement efforts that reminded people discussing peer-to-peer sales of firearms about their obligations to comply with relevant laws and regulations, and prevented minors from accessing such content when we became aware of it. The 2014 update also applied to Instagram, where we provided educational messaging to people who search for sales or promotions of firearms.

We are constantly adapting to new developments and strengthening our robust and aggressive internal system to better respond to and remove reported content from Facebook and Instagram that violates our Community Standards. We make it easy to report content on both Facebook and Instagram because we rely on user reporting to execute our content policy enforcement program. We want to hear about abusive content and when we do, we investigate and respond quickly. Anyone can report content while they are viewing it by simply clicking the down arrow icon on Facebook or the three dots icon on Instagram, which is located in the top right-hand corner the content. People on Facebook and Instagram report more than a million pieces of content as violations to our Community Standards every single day. This content is reviewed by our Community Operations team, who are trained to remove anything that violates our standards, including peer-to-peer sales of firearms or explosives. This team is staffed around the globe and speaks over 40 languages, ensuring continuous review of reported violations, 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. When we become aware of any content that violates our standards, we remove it immediately. This includes disabling Facebook and Instagram accounts dedicated to the peer-to-peer sale of firearms and removing violating Facebook Pages and Groups.



The report from *Wired* about Instagram activity on June 15, 2016, is consistent with what happens when people in the community report photos that they believe violate our Community Standards. We temporarily hide photos associated with potentially violating hashtags while our Community Operations team reviews them. We remove reported photos if they violate any of our policies, including our prohibition on peer-to-peer firearm sales.

As always, Facebook and Instagram will continue to remove content, and notify law enforcement where appropriate, when we are notified about things shared on our services that suggest a direct, credible risk to others' safety, and when we have a good faith believe it is necessary to detect, prevent and address fraud and other illegal activity.

We would be happy to meet with you and/or your staff to address any additional questions you may have about our policies and particular incidents, including related to the tragic shooting perpetrated by Micah Johnson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Egan", is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark that contains the word "Facebook".

Erin Egan
Vice President, U.S. Policy