


Northwest Fire District Policy	Social Media Communications		
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Responsible for maintaining & applying this Policy: Human Resource Services, Administration Services, Community Relations & Public Education Services

Next Review: 11/1/2024

Policy Type: New Policy

Purpose: To establish the policy to: (1) provide guidance on how to engage in social networking in a way to protect yourself and the interests of the District, its employees, vendors and customers; (2) to maintain a standard in managing interactions with public users, and; (3) to ensure compliance with the law. These guidelines supplement current District policies.

Scope: All Personnel


Definitions:

HIPAA: Health Information Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

PHI: protected health information

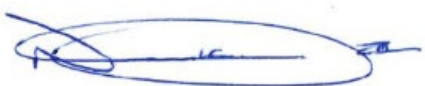
E-PHI: electronic protected health information

Social Media: Blogs, microblogs (i.e., Twitter), online encyclopedias, social networks (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok), video and photo sharing sites (i.e., YouTube), forums and discussion boards, and all other types of digital information sharing for public access.

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Policy:

- 1.0** This policy shall not be construed or applied to interfere with employees' rights under the United States or Arizona Constitutions, or any other federal or state laws.
- 2.0** Northwest Fire District (NWFD) understands the importance of social computing, networking, and social media in today's world. Social Media can be an extremely effective way of marketing our District and expanding our interactions with employees, vendors, and customers. While embracing new technologies, we also want to make sure that the District and our employees engage in social networking in a responsible manner.
 - 2.1** District employees, contractors, and volunteers are personally responsible for the content they publish using social media. At no time shall they purport to speak on behalf of the District unless it is within the scope of their duties to do so.
 - 2.2** District personnel and contractors shall not use the District's logo in any social media unless expressly authorized to do so by the District.
 - 2.3** District personnel or contractors who choose to publish content relating to the District or their employment with the District are prohibited from making slanderous or libelous statements, or engaging in abusive, harassing, or threatening communications.
- 3.0** Guidelines for Personal Use of Social Media by District members, employees, contractors, and/or volunteers.
 - 3.1** Privacy

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3.1.1 Social networking sites should never be considered private. Generally, information posted on social networking sites is public and you should expect that, even with your use of certain privacy settings, what you post on social networking sites can be seen by others and should not be considered private.


3.1.2 Any information posted on public sites (photos, videos, post shares, comments) can be accessed and used by outside media, law enforcement, etc., depending on privacy settings.

3.1.3 Privacy settings on social media sites can act as a safety net for yourself and others to accessing personal or professional information.

3.2 District Monitoring

3.2.1 Rules against harassment, inappropriate conduct, and other rules contained in NWFD Policies apply to your online activities.

3.2.2 Use common sense. You are responsible for the content you publish on social media sites. NWFD will regularly monitor social media postings of applicants and current employees. All applicants and current employees are held to the highest standards. The attitude and professionalism of all applicants and employees is always being evaluated based on many elements including social media. As an applicant or a representative of the District, always consider

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how your comments will be viewed in light of protecting and enhancing both the District's reputation and your own.

3.2.3 Each employee is expected to abide by NWFD policies, both online and offline. Rudeness, unprofessional behavior, and harassment will not be tolerated. Insubordination, threats, intimidation, and disrespect toward a manager/supervisor, coworker, patient, or vendor may result in discipline.

3.2.4 Be clear about who you are and write in first person. You should make clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the District.


3.2.5 Use your own email address. Do not use District-issued email addresses for personal social media use.

3.2.6 Respect all copyright and other intellectual property laws. For NWFD's protection, as well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright, fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, trademarks, and other intellectual property, including NWFD's own copyrights, trademarks, and brands.

3.3 Protect Confidential Information

3.3.1 District personnel and contractors shall not use social media to disseminate any confidential information that would violate a District Policy or any state or federal law.

3.3.2 Respect the privacy of patients, customers, vendors, and employees. Always obtain permission before posting references to customers, vendors, and employees (i.e.,

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compromising pictures or other information that was intended to be private).

3.3.3 Misuse or unauthorized disclosure of confidential information, not otherwise available to persons or agencies outside of NWFD, is cause for disciplinary action, including termination.

3.4 Social Media Usage

3.4.1 Social media participation can be productive and beneficial both personally and professionally. However, ensure that such personal activities do not interfere with your work activities.

3.4.2 District personnel should avoid accessing social media on the District network, during work hours, unless it is within the scope of their duties to do so.

3.4.2.1 Social media use should never interfere with the performance of one's duties with the District.


3.4.2.2 Operational personnel should not access social media while on a call.

3.4.3 We may monitor employee social media communications to ensure compliance with District policies.

4.0 National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

4.1 This policy is not intended to infringe upon an employee's right to engage in protected concerted activity under 29 U.S.C. sec. 157. Employees have the right to discuss terms and conditions of employment and mutual work-related concerns.

5.0 Official Social Media Accounts

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5.1 Operational Standards

5.1.1 The Northwest Fire District manages a number of social media accounts to educate, engage and inform the public of services, training, public education, and emergency response.

5.1.2 The accounts are managed by authorized publishers, to include, but not limited to: Community Relations Supervisor, Assistant Chief of Administration Services, and/or approved Battalion Chiefs.

5.1.3 Official NWFD Social Media Accounts are not monitored 24/7. In the event of an emergency, call 911.

5.2 Prohibited content on Official Social Media Accounts

5.2.1 Profane, abusive or obscene language or content;

5.2.2 Threats;

5.2.3 Defamatory statements;

5.2.4 Sexual content;


5.2.5 Information that will compromise public safety or endorses illegal behavior;

5.2.6 HIPAA protected information;

5.2.7 Encouragement of illegal activity; and

5.2.8 Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation.

5.3 Managing Public Comments

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5.3.1 Comments posted to Official NWFD Social Media Accounts will be monitored and inappropriate content will be removed without prior notice.

5.3.2 The District is not responsible for, neither endorses nor opposes, comments placed on Official NWFD Social Media Accounts by visitors.

5.3.3 NWFD reserves the right to remove inappropriate content, including, but not limited to:

5.3.3.1 Profane language or content;

5.3.3.2 Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;

5.3.3.3 Sexual content or links to sexual content;

5.3.3.4 Content that includes unlawful harassment or threats of violence;


5.3.3.5 Solicitations of commerce;

5.3.3.6 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;

5.3.3.7 Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;

5.3.3.8 Content that defames any person, group, or organization;

5.3.3.9 Content that is false or any malicious statements concerning any employee, the District, or its operations;

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5.3.3.10 Disclosure of any proprietary, confidential, or privileged information;

5.3.3.11 Repeated postings of inappropriate or inflammatory material;

5.3.4 A legal disclaimer* shall be posted on Official NWFD Social Media Accounts or link to the Social Media Policy, if posted on the NWFD public website. An authorized publisher shall delete any comment that contains prohibited content as described in section 2.2.1 of the Social Media Communications Policy.

5.3.5 Users shall not be blocked because the District or authorized publisher(s) dislikes what the content says or represents.

If you have any questions about this policy or any issues surrounding social media, please contact the Privacy Officer, Assistant Chief of Administration Services, and/or Community Relations Supervisor.

Additional Information:

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

*Legal Disclaimer: The following disclaimer or a link to the Social Media Communications Policy shall appear on every Official NWFD Social Media Account.

Northwest Fire District reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments including, but not limited to, those comments that include profane or obscene language, threats, defamatory statements, or information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.