

Administrative Order North-West Fire Protection District		Number 214
		1 of 3
Subject:	Effective:	Revised:
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY	6/15/11	
Issued by:	Approved:	
Michael Roll Fire Chief	Fire Chief:	

214.1 Policy

A. Purpose

To provide guidelines to all members who participate in any form of personal social networking through Social Media.

B. Definitions

- 1. Posts.** Messages sent through or placed on Social Media websites by users, whether in the form of emails, "status updates", "wall" messages, tweets, diary entries, instant messages, web log (or "blog") entries, photographs, videos, etc.
- 2. Social Media** refers to websites hosted by individuals or entities on which individuals and entities communicate by posting information, sending emails and/or otherwise sharing data including, but not limited to, all forms of on-line community activities, such as on-line social networks, message boards, conversation pages, photo sharing websites, and chat rooms, Wikis such as Wikipedia and any other site where text can be posted, Facebook, My Space, Friendster, personal blogs (*i.e.*, BlogSpot, CafePress, etc.), Photobucket, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, Yahoo, Google (including Google Docs, Gmail and other applications). This definition also applies to new forms of communication that may arise the future.

C. Scope

This SOP applies to all Fire Department members. This SOP is in addition to the Communications System policy stated in the Member Handbook and Standard Operating Procedure #213, *Computer Policies*, with which all members must comply.

D. Introduction

The Fire Department understands members may maintain or contribute to Social Media and/or engage in Posts outside of their paid or volunteer positions with the Fire Department and may periodically engage in Posts containing information about their Fire Department positions or Fire Department activities on Social Media. Members engaging in such activities are required to exercise good judgment, and comply with this SOP, the Member Handbook and Standard Operating Procedure #213.

E. Social Media Policy

The Fire Department has the right to monitor and review Social Media Posts made by its members while on-duty and, from time to time, those made while off-duty by Fire Department members as it deems as necessary and appropriate for the efficient and effective administration and operation of the Fire Department. To that end, you have no expectation of privacy while using Fire Department-owned or Fire Department-leased equipment, even when you are merely using the equipment to access your personal email account or other Social Media. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-72-203, you are advised that Posts, e-mails and text messages to/from you may be deemed public records and subject to disclosure under the Colorado Public (Open) Records Act.

YOUR USE OF FIRE DEPARTMENT LEASED OR OWNED EQUIPMENT CONSTITUTES YOUR CONSENT FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO MONITOR AND INTERCEPT YOUR COMMUNICATIONS WHILE IN TRANSIT, AFTER RECEIPT OR WHILE STORED ON FIRE DEPARTMENT LEASED OR OWNED EQUIPMENT UNDER TITLE I AND II OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS PRIVACY ACT OF 1986.

Members may not disclose confidential information of the Fire Department or its members, or confidential information of third parties who have provided the information to the Fire Department, including federal, state or local security/safety information, personnel information, and Protected Health Information as defined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA").

Members maintaining or contributing to Social Media or engaging in Posts must not use the Fire Department's name in their identity (e.g., username, "handle" or screen name). They also must not speak as a representative of the Fire Department, unless expressly authorized by the Fire Department.

Mutual respect and teamwork are essential to effective and efficient Fire Department administration and operation. Members must be courteous, respectful, and thoughtful about how the Fire Department and other members may be affected by Posts. Incomplete, inaccurate, inappropriate, threatening, harassing or poorly worded Posts may be harmful to other members, damage member relationships, undermine the Fire Department's efforts to encourage teamwork, violate the Member Handbook and/or SOPs, or harm the Fire Department, which may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Members bear full responsibility for information contained in their Posts and their Social Media. Members must make certain that their Posts are accurate and must correct any inaccurate statements they make. Members must not reference other Fire Department members or Fire Department customers without obtaining their express permission to do so. Most Social Media sites require that users, when they sign up, agree to abide by a Terms of Service document. Members are responsible for reading, knowing and complying with the Terms of Service of the Social Media sites they use.

Stated simply, your decision to use a different medium does not excuse recklessness in public communication or limit the Fire Department's ability to regulate your Social Media and Posts as it could any other communication. The Fire Department supports your rights to engage in discourse about matters of public concern, to discuss the terms and conditions of your employment and supports your First Amendment rights. However, the Fire Department prohibits actions that violate this policy.

F. Photographs

Members may take photographs or videos (whether by handheld camera or camcorder, cell phone camera or video camera, or otherwise) while performing any Fire Department duty or activity, specifically including during an emergency response, only when doing so will not interfere with the member's performance of his/her duties, those of other Fire Department members, or the public safety, unless taking the photographs or videos are part of the member's job/position description, the member was ordered to perform the task by a higher ranking officer, or the member obtained the prior written authorization of the Fire Chief or his/her designee. Any photograph or video taken while performing any Fire Department duty or activity is the property of the Fire Department, and is not the personal property of the person taking the photograph or video. Any photograph or video taken on the scene of an emergency incident must be included as part of the incident report and file.

A member may not make personal use of a photograph or video taken while performing a Fire Department duty or activity if the photograph or video contains identifying features such as addresses, faces, license plates, *etc.* "Personal use" includes, without limitation, using the photograph/video in Social Media Posts; displaying the photograph/video in any area that may be viewed by the public; or otherwise exhibiting or displaying the photograph/video in a manner that is inconsistent with this policy. Additionally, a member may not make personal use of any photograph or video taken while performing a Fire Department duty or activity until after the completion of all related reports and investigations.

The Fire Department cannot limit a member from taking videos or pictures of emergency incidents or Fire Department activities while he/she is off duty; however, such actions are not authorized by the Fire Department and the member will be personally responsible for any civil or criminal liability arising from such actions, including but not limited to, claims of invasion of privacy, defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, *etc.* The Fire Department also may impose corrective or disciplinary action against the member for such off-duty activities where the activities (i) relate to a *bona fide* occupational requirement, (ii) are reasonably and rationally related to the Fire Department activities and responsibilities of the member, or (iii) there is a conflict of interest with the member's responsibilities to the Fire Department or the appearance of such a conflict of interest.

As with photographs or videos taken while performing a Fire Department duty or activity, the Fire Department discourages members from making personal use of a photograph or video taken while off-duty if the photograph or video contains identifying features such as addresses, faces, license plates, *etc.*, or prior to the completion of all related reports and investigations. Such personal use may create a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest, may constitute a release of confidential information of the Fire Department or protected health information, or may violate other provisions of this policy. Members must be deliberative and thoughtful when disclosing any such information in Posts, email, or text messages.