





# NORTHERN WAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

<b>TITLE:</b> Social Media	<b>SECTION/TOPIC:</b> PERSONNEL
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<b>REVISION DATES:</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>  Gary Vickerson  <hr/> <b>PRESIDENT – BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>  Tim Pope  <hr/> <b>FIRE CHIEF</b>

### I. PURPOSE

- A. This Standard Operating Procedure establishes the parameters for any member that uses social media to reach out to the Northern Wake community, its residents/visitors or connect with those groups with information regarding emergencies, special events, or other important information with respect to any form of representation to Northern Wake Fire Department, be it officially, unofficially, intended or unintended.

### II. SCOPE

- A. This Standard Operating Procedure applies to all members of the Northern Wake Fire Department.

### III. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. All content that may be connected in any way to Northern Wake Fire Department that would portray a poor or unfavorable view/opinion of the organization or any of its members, and/or affiliates that is made available to any person or persons in electronic or physical format;
- B. To include but not limited to pictures, video, audio and text;
- C. Social media examples include, but are not limited to:
- Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Pinterest
  - LinkedIn
  - YouTube
  - Flickr
  - Foursquare
  - Instagram
  - Wikis
  - Chatrooms
  - Blogs
  - Future social media platforms

#### **IV. INTRODUCTION**

- A. The Northern Wake Fire Department understands that members may maintain or contribute to social media and/or engage in posts outside of their paid or volunteer positions with the organization.
- B. The Northern Wake Fire Department understands that members may periodically engage in posts containing information about their fire department positions or fire department activities.
- C. Members engaging in such activities are required to exercise good judgment and to comply with this procedure.

#### **V. PROCEDURE**

- A. Members of the organization may use social media while on duty but must adhere to this procedure:
  - 1. The use of cameras (still and/or video or like devices on phones) texting or posting shall not interfere with your role as a responder or your job duties.
  - 2. The distribution of photos on any social media platform that includes patient faces, likenesses, personal property, license plates or other identifying factors is strictly prohibited.
  - 3. Any members taking pictures or video of events at an actual incident are prohibited from releasing these pictures or videos without express permission of the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief.
  - 4. Members of the organization shall not criticize or ridicule the organization, its officers or other members by speech, writing, or other expression, when such speech, writing or expression
    - is defamatory, obscene, slanderous or unlawful;
    - tends to interfere with the maintenance of proper discipline;
    - damages or impairs the reputation and/or efficiency of the organization or another member of the organization;
    - uses profane, inappropriate language, audio or other hurtful content, including pictures;
    - promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination of any kind on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability;
    - is of sexual content or linked to sexual content;
    - conducts or the encourages criminal activity;
    - compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems;
    - violates a legal ownership interest of any other party (no commercial endorsements);
    - contains images and/or video from incidents which have not been cleared for usage by the department (including training);

- contains images and/or video of patients;
  - contains graphic images.
4. This includes but is not limited to, written, auditory and/or visual messages communicated via or on organizational resources or via personal devices such as cell phones, smart phones, tablets, laptops and computers and/or social media.
  5. Any written and/or visual messages communicated by a member that are relative to the organization in any capacity are the *sole property* of the organization including but not limited to, any written, auditory, and/or visual messages communicated via or on organizational resources or via or on personal devices and/or social media.
  6. The organization understands the right of free speech and freedom of expression, but members of the department must realize there are limits.
  7. The decision by a member to use social media does not excuse recklessness in public communication nor limit the organization's ability to regulate your social media and posts as it would any other communication.
  8. The organization 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 organization provides this guidance to prohibit actions that violate this procedure.
  9. The organization maintains the right to monitor and review posts pertaining to the organization made on social media by its members while on-duty and off duty, as it deems necessary and appropriate for the efficient and effective administration and operation of the organization.
  10. Members may not disclose confidential information regarding the organization or its members or confidential information of third parties who have provided the information to the organization, including information on federal, state or local security/safety information, personnel information, and Protected Health as defined in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability act of 1996. (HIPAA)
  11. Members maintaining or contributing to social media or posting comments or photos may not use the organization's name in their identity, for example, their "handle" or screen name.
  12. Members must not speak as a representative of the organization unless expressly authorized by the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief or Assistant Fire Chief.
  13. Members bear full responsibility for information contained in their posts and their social media.
  14. Posts by members must be accurate, and if not, the said member may be required to correct any inaccurate statements that they make.

15. Members must not reference any other members of the organization, affiliates of the organization or neighboring fire departments without obtaining their express permission to do so.
16. Disregard of this guideline and abuse of this policy may lead to disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the organization.