



Social Media Policy - New Holland Fire Department

This policy outlines the acceptable use of social media by members of the New Holland Fire Department (hereinafter referred to as "the Department"). This policy applies to all members, including firefighters, officers, administrative staff, and volunteers, regardless of rank or position. It covers both personal and Department-related social media accounts.

I. Purpose:

This policy aims to protect the privacy of individuals involved in incidents, maintain the integrity and professionalism of the Department, ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and promote responsible social media use.

II. General Guidelines:

- Professionalism: Members are expected to conduct themselves professionally online, even when using personal social media accounts. Remember that your online actions can reflect on the Department. Avoid posting anything that could damage the Department's reputation or public trust.
- Respect: Treat all individuals with respect, including fellow firefighters, incident victims, community members, and members of other organizations. Avoid discriminatory, offensive, or harassing language.
- Confidentiality: Do not share confidential information related to the Department, its operations, or incident details. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Victim information (names, addresses, medical conditions)
 - Incident details not yet officially released (causes, extent of damage)
 - Internal Department discussions or strategies
 - Information protected by HIPAA or other privacy laws
- Accuracy: Ensure all information you share is accurate and truthful. Avoid spreading rumors or misinformation. If you see inaccurate information online related to the Department, report it to a designated officer.
- Disclaimer: When expressing personal opinions on social media, clearly state that your views are your own and do not represent the Department's official position. A simple phrase like "The views expressed here are my own" can be helpful.
- Chain of Command: If you have concerns about social media activity related to the Department, follow the established chain of command to address those concerns.

III. Specific Prohibitions:

- Photography/Videography at Incident Scenes: Members are strictly prohibited from using their personal cell phones or other personal devices to take photographs or videos at incident scenes. This is to protect the privacy of victims, maintain scene integrity, and avoid potential legal issues. Official Department-issued cameras or devices may be used for documentation purposes as authorized by the Fire Chief or designated officer, and any resulting media must be handled according to Department policy.
- Posting Incident-Related Information: Do not post any information about incidents on social media, even if you believe it is harmless. This includes photos, videos, details about the location, nature of the incident, or any other related information.
- Criticizing the Department or Other Agencies: Avoid posting negative or critical comments about the Department, its policies, or other fire departments or emergency services agencies.
- Social Media During Response: Do not use social media while responding to calls or participating in Department activities. Focus on your duties and ensure the safety of yourself and others.
- Impersonating the Department: Do not create social media accounts that falsely represent the Department or claim to speak on its behalf without authorization.

IV. Department Social Media Accounts:

- Official Department social media accounts will be managed by designated personnel.
- All posts on official accounts must be approved by the designated officer(s) before being published.
- Content should be informative, professional, and aligned with the Department's mission and values.

V. Enforcement:

Violations of this social media policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination from the Department.

VI. Review:

This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically as needed.

Social Media Policy Acknowledgment

I, _____ (printed name), acknowledge that I have received a copy of the social media policy and have read and understood its contents.

Signature: _____

Date: _____