
District Use of Social Media

711.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that any use of social media on behalf of the District is consistent with the district mission.

This policy does not address all aspects of social media use. Specifically, it does not address:

- Personal use of social media by district members (see the Speech, Expression, and Social Networking Policy).
- Use of social media in personnel processes (see the Recruitment and Selection Policy).
- Use of social media for issuance of fire hazard warnings, emergency evacuation instructions, and widespread emergencies (see the Public Alerts Policy).

711.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Social media - Any of a wide array of internet-based tools and platforms that allow for the sharing of information, such as the district website or social networking services.

711.2 POLICY

The Sanibel Fire and Rescue District will use social media as a method of effectively informing the public about district services, issues, investigations, and other relevant events.

District members shall ensure that the use or access of social media is done in a manner that protects the constitutional rights of all people.

711.3 AUTHORIZED USERS

Only members authorized by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee may utilize social media on behalf of the District. Authorized members shall use only district-approved equipment during the normal course of duties to post and monitor district-related social media, unless they are specifically authorized to do otherwise by their supervisors.

The Fire Chief may develop specific guidelines identifying the type of content that may be posted. Any content that does not strictly conform to the guidelines should be approved by a supervisor prior to posting.

Requests to post information over district social media by members who are not authorized to post should be made through the member's chain of command.

711.4 AUTHORIZED CONTENT

Only content that is appropriate for public release, supports the district mission, and conforms to all district policies regarding the release of information may be posted.

Examples of appropriate content include:

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- (a) Announcements.
- (b) Tips and information related to fire prevention.
- (c) Investigative requests for information.
- (d) Requests that ask the community to engage in projects that are relevant to the district mission.
- (e) Real-time safety information that is related to in-progress fire incidents, geographical warnings, or disaster information.
- (f) Media releases.
- (g) Recruitment of personnel.

711.4.1 INCIDENT-SPECIFIC USE

In instances of active incidents where speed, accuracy, and frequent updates are paramount (e.g., incident alerts, public safety information), the Public Information Officer or the authorized designee will be responsible for the compilation of information to be released, subject to the approval of the Incident Commander.

711.5 PROHIBITED CONTENT

Content that is prohibited from posting includes but is not limited to:

- (a) Content that is abusive, discriminatory, inflammatory, or sexually explicit.
- (b) Any information that violates individual rights, including confidentiality and/or privacy rights and those provided under state, federal, or local laws.
- (c) Any information that could compromise an ongoing investigation.
- (d) Any information that could tend to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation, or professionalism of the Sanibel Fire and Rescue District or its members.
- (e) Any information that could compromise the safety and security of district operations, members of the District, victims, patients, or the public.
- (f) Any content posted for personal use.
- (g) Any content that has not been properly authorized by this policy or a supervisor.

Any member who becomes aware of content on this district's social media site that they believe is unauthorized or inappropriate should promptly report such content to a supervisor. The supervisor will ensure its removal from public view and investigate the cause of the entry.

711.5.1 PUBLIC POSTING PROHIBITED

District social media sites shall be designed and maintained to prevent posting of content by the public.

The District may provide a method for members of the public to contact district members directly.

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711.6 MONITORING CONTENT

The Fire Chief will appoint a supervisor to review, at least annually, the use of district social media and report back on, at a minimum, the resources being used, the effectiveness of the content, any unauthorized or inappropriate content, and the resolution of any issues.

711.7 RETENTION OF RECORDS

The Fire Chief or his designee should work with the Custodian of Records to establish a method of ensuring that public records generated through the use of social media are retained in accordance with established records retention schedules.

711.8 TRAINING

Authorized members should receive training that, at a minimum, addresses legal issues concerning the appropriate use of social media sites, as well as privacy, civil rights, and the dissemination and retention of information posted on district sites.