

	<b>Terryville Fire Department Chiefs Policy</b>	
	<u>Subject</u> <b>Social Media</b>	CP# 2-13  Initiated 3/1/2015
	<u>Authority</u> <b>Chief of Department</b>	Revised

**A. PURPOSE**

1. The Terryville Fire Department endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication and information exchange. This policy established the department’s position on the use and management of social media and provides guidelines on the management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media; rather social media in general terms as technology will outpace our ability to discover emerging technology and create policies governing its use.

**B. PHILOSOPHY**

1. Social media provides a valuable means of assisting our department and its personnel in meeting community education, community information, fire prevention, and other related organizational and community objectives. This policy identifies possible uses that may be evaluated and utilized as deemed necessary by the chief’s office. The department also recognizes the role that social media tools may play in the personal lives of department personnel. The personal use of social media can have an effect on fire department personnel in their official capacity as firefighters. This policy is a means to provide guidance of a precautionary nature as well as restrictions and prohibitions on the use of social media by department personnel.

**C. DEFINITIONS**

1. *Blog*: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments.
2. *Post*: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
3. *Profile*: Information that a user provides about him/herself on a social networking site.
4. *Social Media*: A category of internet-based resources that enable the user to generate content and encourage other user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Wikipedia, blogs, and other similar sites
5. *Social Networks*: Platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

6. *Speech*: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

#### **D. POLICY**

1. The department's social media page shall be approved and maintained by the Chief of Department or designee and include the following:
  - An introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the department's presence on the website.
  - A link to the department's official website.
  - The department patch/logo prominently displayed
  - Appropriate and accurate contact information
2. The department's social media page shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including information technology and records management policies.
3. Department personnel authorized to represent the department via social media outlets shall do the following:
  - Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department and accordingly, shall adhere to all department standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
  - Identify themselves as a member of the department.
  - Post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate information, including photographs or videos, related to department training, activities, or related assignments ONLY with permission from the chief's office.
4. Personal Use
  - Precautions and prohibitions
    1. Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair or impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among the membership, or negatively affect the public perception of the department.
    2. Department personnel and employees are cautioned that their speech, either on or off duty, and in the course of their official duties that has a nexus to the employee/member's duties and responsibilities.

- This may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the department.
  - Department personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their position within this department and of this department.
3. Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their membership with the Terryville Fire Department without permission from the Chief of Department. This shall include information regarding any alarms that the department responds to.
  4. Department personnel are cautioned not to do the following:
    - Display department logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages without prior permission from the chief's office.
    - Post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause you to be identified as a member of the Terryville Fire Department. Doing so may cause your posts to be misrepresented as those of the Terryville Fire Department.
  5. When using social media, department personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the World Wide Web.
  6. Adherence to the department conduct expectations (CP# 2-03), is required in the personal use of social media. In particular, department personnel are prohibited from the following:
    - Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, religion, or protected class of individuals.
    - Divulging information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this department without express authorization from the Chief.
  7. Department personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization, otherwise known as defamation, to include:

- Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person.
  - Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes with that person's permission for an exploitative purpose.
  - Publishing the create work of another, trademarks, or certain business information without the permission of the owner.
8. Department personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.
  9. Department personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the department at any time without prior notice.

#### 5. Violations

- Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or webpage in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify their company officers, who shall forward said information to the chief's office without delay.
- Violation of this social media policy may result in suspension or termination.