

District Social Media Use

710.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Central Fire District may use social media as a method of effectively informing the public regarding District services, activities, incidents, events, safety information, and other relevant content. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the management and use of social media channels maintained and monitored by the District. This policy applies to all District employees, consultants, providers, and contractors acting in an official capacity and when communicating with the public on behalf of the District, and to the extent applicable, to members of the public posting on the District's social media web pages.

Personnel authorized to manage the District's social media presence shall ensure the use or access of social media is done in a manner that protects the constitutional rights of all.

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that any use of social media on behalf of the District is consistent with the District's mission, vision and values.

This policy does not address personal use of social media by District personnel and applies solely to the use of official District social media accounts.

710.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Social Media – Any array of internet-based tools and platforms that allow for the sharing of information, such as the District website or social networking services.

Limited Public Forum – A limited forum is a type of designated public forum. In a "limited forum," the government may discriminate against classes of speakers or types of speech. However, the government is still prohibited from engaging in viewpoint discrimination.

710.1.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of those authorized as District social media page administrators to follow this policy and associated procedures.

710.2 POLICY

The Central Fire District shall follow established procedures and guidelines.

710.2.1 AUTHORIZED USERS

Only personnel authorized by the Fire Chief or the authorized designee may administer social media on behalf of the District. Authorized personnel shall only use District-issued equipment during the normal course of duty to post and monitor District-related social media, unless specifically authorized to do otherwise by the Fire Chief. No new District social media account shall be created without review and approval of the Fire Chief. Authorized page administrators shall have social media training and possess appropriate content and technical experience (see 710.2.8 : Training for more information).

Requests to post information over District social media by personnel who are not authorized to post should be made to the individual assigned to manage the District's social media presence.

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

Central FD of Santa Cruz County Policy Manual

District Social Media Use

710.2.2 CONTENT GUIDELINES

The District's goal is to ensure that communications posted on social media platforms are consistent with policy, law, and within the best interests of the District.

All content posted by designated page administrators to District social media platforms will be subject to approval by the Fire Chief or authorized designee. In addition, the following guidelines shall be observed:

- (a) The content posted on District social media pages shall only pertain to District-sponsored or District-endorsed programs, services, activities, or events.
- (b) When promoting programs, services, or events that are not hosted by the District, such as events hosted by IAFF Locals or allied agency partners, it is preferred that any content posted in relation to events originate on the hosting party's social media pages, and that the content then be re-shared on the District's social media page whenever possible.
- (c) The District's website (www.centralfiresc.org) will remain the District's primary and predominate internet presence.
- (d) Whenever possible and applicable, content posted to the District's social media pages will also be made available on the District's website.
- (e) Whenever possible and applicable, content posted to the District's social media pages shall contain hyperlinks directing visitors back to the District's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services related to conducting business with the District.
- (f) The content posted on District social media will maintain a professional and informative tone, and will be verified for accuracy before posting.
- (g) All District social media activity must comply with local, state, and federal laws, and District policies including any applicable accessibility guidelines.

710.2.3 APPROPRIATE CONTENT

Only content that is appropriate for public release and conforms to District policy regarding the release of information may be posted.

Examples of appropriate content include:

- (a) Announcements.
- (b) Tips and information relating to fire safety or emergency preparedness.
- (c) Real-time safety information that is related to in-progress incidents, geographical warnings, or disaster information.
- (d) Information about District programs, services, and activities.
- (e) Press releases.
- (f) Personnel recruitment.
- (g) District-sponsored event information.

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

Central FD of Santa Cruz County Policy Manual

District Social Media Use

710.2.4 PROHIBITED CONTENT

In addition to section 710.3.2, the following is prohibited content for posts by District personnel (the following is a non-exhaustive list):

- (a) Abusive, discriminatory, inflammatory or sexually explicit.
- (b) Violation of 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 compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of Central Fire District or its personnel.
- (e) Any information that could compromise the safety and security of District operations, District personnel, or patients under District care.
- (f) Any content posted for personal use sales or marketing.
- (g) Political campaigns or endorsement of a candidate.
- (h) Any content that has not been properly authorized by the Fire Chief or their authorized designee.

Personnel who become aware of content on the District's social media pages that they believe is unauthorized or inappropriate should promptly report such content to a supervisor. The supervisor will then report the unauthorized or inappropriate content to a designated page administrator who will ensure its removal from public view and investigate the unauthorized or inappropriate posting.

710.2.5 PUBLIC POSTING PROHIBITED

District social media pages 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 the District directly through social media platforms(i.e. direct messaging).

710.2.6 CONTENT MONITORING AND REMOVAL

For the purposes of determining whether or not to remove content or comments made by the public on District social media pages, the District's social media accounts shall be considered a limited public forum in relation to First Amendment-protected speech.

District's position on whether or not to remove certain types of comments or content will be reviewed when applicable or necessary with District Counsel. Content monitoring will be done in accordance with Section 710.3 of this Policy.

The decision to remove content can only be made by the Fire Chief or their authorized designee. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained. Any content removed will be documented via screenshot, complete with the date of removal, time of removal, and identity of the poster, and stored in a clearly identified secure folder on the District's shared server.

The decision to remove content as referenced in these guidelines will be applied uniformly.

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

Central FD of Santa Cruz County Policy Manual

District Social Media Use

710.2.7 RECORDS RETENTION

The District's social media pages are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to District business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication is a public record. The District is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any records requests relating to social media.

California Law and District records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. The District shall preserve records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period on a District server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.

710.2.8 TRAINING

Designated page administrators and personnel authorized to post to the District's social media pages shall receive training that, at minimum, addresses legal issues concerning the appropriate use of social media platforms, as well as privacy, civil rights, dissemination and retention of information posted on District pages.

710.2.9 BROWN ACT COMPLIANCE

All District social media pages shall be managed consistent with the Brown Act. Members of the District Board, Commissions, and Committees, per AB 992, may "answer questions, provide information to the public, or to solicit information from the public regarding a matter that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body." However, they must not use District social media to deliberate or comment on matters pending before them, to avoid the appearance of unlawful meetings under the Brown Act. In general, District Board members, Commission and Committee members should avoid participating in discussions on social media channels.

710.3 PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY

The District's social media sites are moderated online discussion sites and are designated as limited public forums. The District has an important interest in assuring the accuracy and consistency of information associated with our social media accounts. It also respects the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the rights outlined in our state constitution, and the right to freedom of speech. These terms and conditions establish guidelines for the public's use of the District's social media accounts that balance all these values.

710.3.1 SCOPE

By accessing, viewing and/or posting content to our social media sites, you (whether an employee or a member of the public) accept, without limitation or qualification, these terms and conditions of use, as well as any other terms of use required by the company that owns and operates the social media site. If you do not agree to the terms of this policy, do not view or post any content. Your use of our social media sites are deemed acceptance of these terms and conditions and to have the same effect as if you had actually physically signed an agreement.

These terms and conditions are in addition to the third-party policies, terms, and conditions of any social media provider (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, X, YouTube, etc.). The District does not operate

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

Central FD of Santa Cruz County Policy Manual

District Social Media Use

or control social media sites and is subject to the terms of use for these sites by the provider. The District does not control the terms and conditions of the social media site providers.

710.3.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Your comments are public and reviewed. The District's social media sites are public sites and viewable by everyone. Comments and shared information also become part of a public record and may be archived in order to abide with applicable laws, e-discovery requirements, and document retention policies. Information shared through our social media site may be public records subject to full disclosure to those who request it through the California Public Records Act or other public information statutes. Use of the District's social media sites and the posting of any content is deemed a waiver by the user of any rights to privacy or confidentiality.

Please be aware that the District reviews all comments after posting. Because these sites are visible to all ages, the District expects persons who leave comments to do so with respect, good manners, and careful thought of who might be seeing them.

Consistent with the purpose of a limited public forum, the District reserves the right to moderate, monitor, remove, prohibit, restrict, block, suspend, terminate, delete, discontinue or reject comments and access to comments if they are:

- (a) Profane, obscene, pornographic, abusive, threatening, racist, defamatory, offensive or contain violent language;
- (b) Trolling (posts that are deliberately offensive, provocative, or disruptive and intended to hijack our content, deflect our information off-track, upset someone or create angry responses from employees or other visitors);
- (c) In violation of applicable federal, state or local law or regulation;
- (d) Violations of the intellectual property rights of others;
- (e) Spam (unsolicited messages that are usually intended as advertising or messages that are repeatedly posted on the same site);
- (f) Attacks or calls-to-action for attacks on specific groups;
- (g) Intended to harass, threaten or abuse an individual or are defamatory, derogatory, or are personal attacks on any District official, employee, resident, or business person;
- (h) Hateful or discriminatory comments regarding or comments that promote, foster, or perpetuate discrimination of harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or a protected class under local, state, or federal law;
- (i) Comments that contain a hyperlink to any website other than those under District control. This will be done without regard to the viewpoint of the comment containing such a link or the content of the site to which the link redirects;
- (j) Cyber-stalking or threats to an individual or organization, or intended to collect or post private information and data without disclosure;

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

Central FD of Santa Cruz County Policy Manual

District Social Media Use

- (k) Messages that relate to confidential, private, or proprietary information;
- (l) Messages that are inappropriate, in poor taste, or otherwise contrary to the purposes of our site or the business of the District;
- (m) Self-promotion;
- (n) Solicitation of funds;
- (o) Unsolicited business proposals and inquiries;
- (p) Encouragement of illegal or unlawful activity;
- (q) Posts not in compliance with the social media host's own terms and conditions; and
- (r) Impersonations of any person or entity, including, but not limited to, a District staff member or elected official, or falsely state or otherwise misrepresent their affiliation with a person or entity.

The above list is not necessarily exhaustive and the District reserves the right to remove or restrict any post or comment that violates the purpose or spirit of these terms and conditions.

Individuals who comment or post to the District's social media sites and who repeatedly violate these terms and conditions may, among other actions, be banned, prohibited from posting future comments, or be reported to the social media provider.

While comments may be posted at any time because of the nature of social media, the District will review and screen comments during regular business hours.

Information contained on our social media sites may be intercepted, recorded, read, copied, and disclosed by and to authorized personnel for any official purpose, including criminal investigations. Unauthorized access or use of our social media sites, including attempting unauthorized copying, altering, destroying, or damaging site content may violate the Federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 and may subject violators to criminal, civil, and/or administrative action.

710.3.3 DISTRICT COMMENTS

The District's comments are not legal advice and an individual's comments are not official notice.

Postings, interactions, and messages made through social media sites do not constitute legal advice. Likewise, anything you post is not considered an official notice or comment to the District or to any official or to any of our employees for any purpose. The District disclaims all warranties, expressed or implied, for any of the information and content provided in its social media site.

Individuals posting on the District's social media web pages may own their comments but the District can use them.

Individuals own all of the comments, content, messages, and similar information that they post on the District's social media sites (subject to any terms or conditions of the social media provider). Individuals are responsible for how they control the sharing of that content through the privacy and application settings of the social media provider.

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

Central FD of Santa Cruz County Policy Manual

District Social Media Use

By posting on the District's social media sites, individuals grant the District a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use that content. That means the District can reproduce, distribute, publish, display, and otherwise use individuals' content.

If an individual does not wish to have the content they have posted used, published, copied and/or reprinted, such individual is advised to not post on the District's social media sites.

These guidelines will be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.