

The Board of Fire Commissioners recognizes and acknowledges that social media provides a valuable means of assisting the fire service and its personnel in fulfilling its obligation in meeting organizational objectives, community education and information and other related fire and emergency response functions and services. The Board endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication and information exchange, streamline processes and foster productivity with its paid and volunteer staff.

The purpose and intent of the within policy is to establish the Board's position on the use and management of social media. The Policy Committee shall develop and implement guidelines pertaining to initiation, management, use, administration and oversight of a social media program.

This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media but rather social media in general terms as technology will outpace the Board's ability to discover emerging technology and create policies for its use.

The Board's goal through this policy is to direct its administration to identify possible social media tools and uses, to evaluate its adaption to the fire service and implement same as deemed appropriate and necessary for the District and Company.

The Board also recognizes the role social media may play in the personal lives of District and Company personnel. The personal use of social media can have an effect on District and Company personnel in their official capacity as paid and volunteer personnel. The guidelines promulgated by the Policy Committee shall include a means to provide guidance of a precautionary nature as well as restrictions and prohibitions on the use of social media by District and Company personnel. All guidelines shall balance the individual's interest in free speech against the Board's interest in the effective and efficient fulfillment of its responsibilities to the public. The guidelines shall inure to ensure the public entrustment of the Board's charge and to promote, maintain and enhance a duty of tradition of effective public service by establishing standards of conduct to guide its personnel. The guidelines shall not abridge or infringe upon protected rights under Federal and State Legislation.

Social media sites are subject to the Open Public Records Act and postings shall be accessible and maintained as an official Board record pursuant to and in accordance with the "Open Public Records Act"; N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, *et seq.* and the "Destruction of Public Records Law (1953)"; N.J.S.A. 47:3-8.1, *et seq.* as set forth by the State of New Jersey Municipal Agency Record Retention Schedule promulgated by the Division of Archives and Record Management.

The Board shall enact Rules and Regulations, procedures or guidelines and directives to implement or otherwise effectuate the purpose and intent of this Policy and Federal, State and local laws, and Rules, Regulations, Procedures, Guidelines or Directives promulgated thereto, as amended, which were enacted to insure or supplement the intent and purpose of this Policy. Said Rules and Regulations, procedures or guidelines and directives may be amended or supplemented by the Board as it deems necessary.

This Policy does not modify existing Board policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations or directives and shall be read and construed in conjunction with other Board policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations or directives so that any inconsistencies or ambiguities in this Policy may be resolved by referencing other Board policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, regulations or directives. Any interpretation as to the meaning of this Policy shall not be contrary to federal, state or local laws, or contrary to or inconsistent with the mandated charge of the Board. If any provision paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase set forth in this Policy is for any reason held or determined to be unconstitutional or invalid, same shall not affect the remainder of this Policy.

Legal References: Open Public Records Act; N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, *et seq.*
Destruction of Public Records Law (1953); N.J.S.A. 47:3-8.1, *et seq.*

1st Reading:

Effective Date:

2nd Reading:

Revised Date: