

# Social Media

## Chapter 7.23

Date: October 2018

Revised:

Submitted by: Deputy Chief

Approved by: Fire Chief

### Purpose

To provide guidance to ACFR employees in clarifying boundaries between inappropriate and appropriate use of social media by ACFR personnel including adhering to the Countywide Administrative Procedure 02-07 (Information Technology Usage and Security Procedures).

### Guidelines

1. ACFR 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, discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of ACFR.
2. A social media code of conduct shall be adhered to by all ACFR members:
  - When engaging in social media or social networking activities, all personnel will maintain a level of professionalism both on-duty and off-duty that is consistent with the mission statement of ACFR.
  - The publication of any statement, comment, imagery, or information through any medium of communication which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the department is prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.
  - Members are prohibited from using Alachua County owned digital images, audio, or video without authorization from the Fire Chief or his designee.
  - Members are prohibited from conduct that may bring discredit upon ACFR or other members of the department.
3. No member, while speaking as a **private citizen** on a **matter of public concern** regarding ACFR, shall speak in such a way as to cause actual harm or disruption to the operations of the department.
4. Members of ACFR will not speak on a **matter of public concern** as a **spokesperson** for ACFR without permission of the Fire Chief or his designee.
  - As public employees, ACFR personnel are cautioned that identifying yourself as an ACFR employee or the use of imagery that can be linked to ACFR, even on an employee's private page, that can be interpreted by the public as a representation of ACFR and may not be covered under the First Amendment.
5. The use of titles, ACFR or Alachua County logos, and department owned images or identification that is contrary to the County's code of conduct is prohibited. Furthermore, the use of titles, ACFR or Alachua County logos, and department owned images or identification that creates an impression in any way that the member is a spokesperson for Alachua County Fire Rescue is prohibited unless authorized by the Fire Chief or his designee.
6. Members are prohibited from publicly discussing ACFR matters that are not of public concern unless doing so is with other employees and/or employee representatives of the

collective bargaining unit, and is for the purpose of engaging in concerted activities relative to workplace issues.

7. Members shall not engage in speech that is **false, deceptive, libelous, slanderous, misleading, or causes harm** to others (including speech that constitutes **hate speech or harassment**). Members shall not discuss protected or confidential matters of the department including, but not limited to:
  - Matters that are under investigation
  - Patient and employee information protected by HIPAA/medical confidentiality laws
  - Personnel matters that are protected from disclosure by law
  - Sensitive information specific to an incident that would potentially embarrass those members of the public, department, county, or municipality involved or present.
8. The use of personal helmet or dash mounted cameras, audio devices or other equipment are prohibited without authorization from the Fire Chief or his designee.
9. Scene photographs are allowed but must meet the following standards:
  - The taking of photographs must not interfere with or delay operational activities
  - Caution should be taken while taking photographs to ensure that no form of identification is captured, example: license plates, home addresses, face of citizens/patients etc.
  - Photographs are prohibited where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy including, bathroom, bedroom, locker room, changing area, or any other location.
10. ACFR or County owned social media pages.
  - These sites are the property of Alachua County and as such all postings, comments, and data are public record. Therefore, these sites shall not be used for any form of personal communication. All postings or comments must meet the guidelines set forth in this policy.
  - These sites are monitored by administrators who will respond to citizen comments, post photographs, and articles.
  - ACFR has established an email address [acfrpio@alachuacounty.us](mailto:acfrpio@alachuacounty.us) as a means for ACFR members and/or the public to submit ideas, information, photo/video imagery that may be posted on ACFR's pages. This email address will be checked on a regular basis by the administrators to ensure postings are timely, accurate, and adhere to this policy.
  - Administrators will be responsible for ensuring that ACFR social media pages follow this policy. Any comments by members that do not follow this policy or represent negatively upon ACFR will be deleted by the administrators and the member subject to disciplinary action.
  - Administrators will be responsible for ensuring that ACFR social media pages comply with Alachua County Communication & Legislative Affairs Social Networking Procedures, specifically Section 8.5 as outline below

## Social Networking Procedures

8.5 - Going live with a site creates a responsibility for the registering department to be active in the maintenance of the site. Responsibilities of the site maintainer include:

8.5.1 - Posting fresh material in a timely fashion to keep site subscribers interested and engaged.

8.5.2 - Responding to comments in a timely manner

8.5.3 - Deleting sites that are dormant