



# ABINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

OG - 100-112

## Electronic and Social Media Use Guidelines

### 1.0 Purpose:

The goal of Abington Township Fire Department's Electronic and Social Media Use Guidelines is to establish guidelines of a precautionary nature for acceptable and unacceptable use of content captured by electronic devices and social media while members are engaged in departmental activities, functions, and emergency response situations. These guidelines are not meant to address one particular form of social media, but rather social media in general including new emerging technology.

### 2.0 Definition:

**2.1 Social media** is the term used to define websites, mobile applications (apps), internet-based tools and interactive communication technologies that allow users to interact with one another to share photos, text, data, information, opinions, knowledge, interest, and insight. Social media encompasses a wide range of platforms, *including, but not limited to*, blogs, Vblogs, wikis, video and photo sharing websites, social and professional networking sites, website commenting sections, message boards, and content sharing sites. Some of the more commonly used sources of social media are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Tik-Tok and Instagram. The absence of reference to a specific site or device does not limit the intent of this guideline to outline appropriate and inappropriate use of social media.

**2.2 Electronic Device:** An electronic device is a term used to define cell phones, smart phones, cameras, beepers, pagers, camcorders, video cameras, iPods, laptops, desktop computers, tablet computers, and personal digital assistants (PDA) that allow users to transmit voice communications, videos, photos, text, emails, data, files, information, opinions, and knowledge to other individuals utilizing an electronic device.

### 3.0 Guidelines:

The Abington Township Fire Department (ATFD) Electronic and Social Media Use Guidelines outlines acceptable and unacceptable use of social media and electronic devices in the department and its five fire companies: Abington, McKinley, Weldon, Edge Hill, and Roslyn.

**3.1** When engaging in electronic and social media activities, all members will maintain a level of professionalism that is consistent with the honorable *Mission, Vision, and Values* of the ATFD.

**3.2** This guideline shall directly apply to Abington Township Fire Department and members' personally owned, operated, and maintained social media accounts and electronic devices that can photograph; capture or record still images, video, or sound; or transmit text, data, or information to social media accounts of Abington Township Fire Department members.

**3.3** Utilizing social media or electronic devices shall not interfere with the duties and responsibilities of Abington Township Fire Department members.

**3.4** Posting confidential information and/or content that is offensive, derogatory, defamatory, off-color or sexual in content to social media about the department may result in fire company initiated disciplinary action. Confidential information includes operational data and records, investigative information, department finances, personnel matters and may also include pictures and videos from rescue operations, fire, and emergency calls.

**3.5** Abington Township Fire Department members are responsible for all content that is posted to their personal social media accounts. Using social media to harass, threaten, disparage, intimidate, or discriminate against the community, members, volunteers, or other individuals is unprofessional and inappropriate.

**3.6** Members are encouraged to use the internet and social media respectfully, responsibly, and accurately, since ATFD member postings reflect on the entire department.

**3.7** Abington Township Fire Department members shall not use department or individual companies' logos or images unless they are given permission to do so.

**3.8** Abington Township Fire Department members authorized by their fire company or fire chief to act as spokespeople shall be the only individuals permitted to disseminate information to the media (editors, reporters, newspapers, television stations, websites, bloggers) regarding department activities, e.g., emergency situations, ongoing investigations, upcoming events, etc.

**3.9** The Electronic and Social Media Use Guidelines applies to all members, volunteers, and employees of the Abington Township Fire Department.