

Hazlet Township Fire District #1
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE

Adopted 10/14/2020

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to define and regulate the use of social media by the Hazlet Township Fire Department and by its members.

DEFINITIONS:

- a) **Social media** is any form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content. The term social media includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, SnapChat, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube.
- b) **Hazlet Township Fire District #1:** Elected Board of Fire Commissioners; all paid and volunteer employees of the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 and Bureau of Fire Prevention; and all members of the three township fire companies (Hazlet Fire Company #1, North Centerville Vol. Fire Company No. 1, and West Keansburg Fire Company No. 1).
- c) **Hazlet Township Fire District Social Media Site:** A social media site created, maintained, and controlled by the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 or its designee.
- d) **Personal Social Media:** Social media content maintained and controlled by any individual listed under “b) Hazlet Township Fire District #1” above.

HAZLET TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT #1 SOCIAL MEDIA SITES:

- a) Hazlet Township Fire District #1 social media sites shall not be created without the approval of the Hazlet Township Board of Fire Commissioners.
- b) All content posted on any Hazlet Township Fire District #1 social media sites shall be managed by the Elected Board of Fire Commissioners.
- c) All content posted on any Hazlet Township Fire District #1 social media site shall adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and policies including fire district policy and Cathy's Law (Bill S199).

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GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA:

- a) No information, videos, or pictures gathered while actively on an emergency call, assignment, or training for the Hazlet Township Fire Dept. may be posted in any format without the approval of all three Township Fire Chiefs.
- b) The Fire Department Chiefs will be permitted to capture images or video recordings for the purpose of positively and properly promoting the Hazlet Township Fire District #1. However, all related rules, regulations, guidelines, and laws are to be followed.
- c) Content of any kind that negatively portrays the Hazlet Township Fire District #1, Hazlet Township Fire Department, or the Department's partner agencies, neighboring fire departments, or towns, is strictly prohibited. Content that is unprofessional, derogatory, unethical, dishonorable, or otherwise displays an undesirable, harmful, and destructive public perception is also strictly prohibited.
- d) Any and all content on personal social media accounts belonging to a member or employee of the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 is a direct reflection of the individual, and of the Hazlet Township Fire District #1. All posts are to be professional and not in a manner that brings discredit or dishonor to the Fire District.
- e) Hazlet Township Fire District #1 confidential or proprietary information is not to be photographed, posted, or shared in any manner.
- f) No materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of Hazlet Township Fire District #1 are to be photographed, posted, or shared in any manner.
- g) Photographs displaying Hazlet Township Fire District #1 logo's, fire apparatus, fire company equipment, fire company property, and related images that are in any way connected to the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 are to be displayed in a respectful and positive manner.
- h) The Hazlet Township Fire District #1, Elected Board of Fire Commissioners reserve the right to request any post be removed from a member or employee's personal social media site(s) if it displays inappropriate or non-approved fire district images or any fire district intellectual property. This includes all items listed above under "g" above.
- i) Social media content shall adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and Hazlet Township Fire District #1 guidelines, including Cathy's Law, Bill S199.

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- j) Helmet camera usage is prohibited from use on any social media platform, except if the photographic or video recording meets “b” above.

DOCUMENTATION AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR VIOLATION OF POLICY:

- a) Any photograph or video that is believed to be a violation of the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 Social Media Policy shall be immediately brought to the attention of one of the Elected Board of Fire Commissioners.
- b) All photographic or video evidence of the violation shall also be provided to the Fire Commissioners in order to determine if the content constitutes a violation.
- c) If it is determined that the content provided is a violation of the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 Social Media Guideline, the incident shall be documented by the receiving Fire Commissioner. Once completed, a copy of all such documentation shall be forwarded to the respective Fire Chief or immediate supervisor of the individual responsible for sharing the content.
- d) The Fire Chief or supervisor shall contact the individual and inform them of the complaint and ask that they remove all related content immediately.
- e) If the content is removed, the original documentation and a copy of all correspondence related to the post shall be copied and placed into the individual’s personnel file. No further action will be required.
- f) Failure or refusal to remove a post may result in potential disciplinary action being taken by the Hazlet Township Board of Fire Commissioners. Discipline can include a suspension up to and including termination from the Hazlet Township Fire District #1.
- g) Prior to installment of any Disciplinary Action all members of the Hazlet Township Fire District #1 have the right to an in-person meeting with the Elected Board of Fire Commissioners to discuss the particular incident and provide any information regarding the post. At the conclusion of such meeting the Board of Fire Commissioners shall decide whether or not disciplinary action is warranted.
- h) If subject repeatedly violates the policy, and it is determined that disciplinary action is warranted, then the following schedule shall be followed.
- First Offense – 30-day suspension from Fire District.
 - Second Offense - 90-day suspension from Fire District.
 - Third Offense – Termination from Fire District.