

Stillwater Fire District
Stillwater, New York

Fire District Policy and Procedure Policy Number: 9 of 2010

Policy Name: Social Networking & the use of Electronic Devices

Date Issued: June 16, 2010

Effective: June 16, 2010

Revised: February 2016

Review Date: January 2017

(revised to include the use of electronic devices)

I. PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this policy is to address the appearance of official presence of the Fire District and subsequently the Fire Company's good name when used on social networking or internet web sites. It is the intent to set a minimum standard for the posting of any information which may be sensitive or detrimental to the organization, to its members or to members of the public who deal with the organization. In relation to the posting of information on public web sites, the Fire District intends to manage photographs and the use of electronic devices both on and off duty when there are references made to the Fire District and the Fire Company.

II. AUTHORITY

A. Under Town Law Article 11, sub section 176 (10) "Fire Districts may organize, operate, maintain and equip fire companies...and provide for the removal of members for cause." In addition (11) states that Fire Districts "may adopt rules and regulations governing all fire companies and fire departments in said district and prescribing the duties of the members thereof and enforce discipline...."

III. POLICY

- A. *The use of the words Stillwater Fire District or Arvin Hart Fire Company on the internet or other communications systems in a negative, detrimental, demeaning, derogatory, controversial or confrontational way shall be prohibited.*
1. Officers, members and employees are not permitted to utilize the words Stillwater Fire District and or Arvin Hart Fire Company on any internet sites, blogs, Facebook, My Space or similar pages or resources set up for communications on the internet or on other communications systems *in a negative, detrimental, demeaning, derogatory, controversial or confrontational way. Social media shall be used for beneficial uses to denote the organization in positively.*
 2. The Stillwater Fire District is a political subdivision of the State of New York and the Arvin Hart Fire Company is a volunteer fire company operating under the auspices of the Stillwater Fire District to provide public service to the Town of Stillwater residents. As such it is important for the Board of Fire Commissioners to make certain that the public is not misled into believing

- that some internet communications resource is an official resource of the District or Fire Company that is authorized to provide official information, when it is not.
3. The only way to prevent the spread of misinformation in this regard is for the Board to provide oversight for the dissemination of information under the official name of the District and Company.
 4. Nothing contained herein shall prevent officers, members and employees from using their personal computer and communications resources to participate in communications on the Internet or other communications system so long as they do not do so under the name of the Stillwater Fire District and or the Arvin Hart Fire Company and as long as they do not communicate privileged or confidential district or department information or images or otherwise communicate in a manner that is unprofessional or violates this policy.
 5. Personal blogs shall have a clear disclaimer that the views expressed by the author do not represent the views of the fire district and or the fire company.
 6. Logos of the fire district and or company may not be used on social network or internet sites without prior consent of the authority having jurisdiction.
 7. This policy shall be jointly enforced by the Fire District and the Administrative Officers of the Fire Company.
- B. Under no circumstances will members be allowed to use images obtained using a personal camera, video recorder, or the camera/video function of a personal electronic device or any other digital imaging device during any incident which are unprofessional, indicate the identity or physical condition of persons involved in the incident. If there is any question on the appropriateness of the use of obtained images, a chief officer shall be consulted.
1. All incident photography/video shall be for clinical, general news stories of department activity, documentation or training purposes only and conducted by or at the direction of Command personnel in charge at the incident.
 2. All photographs containing individual patient information are covered by HIPAA privacy laws and must be protected in the same manner as patient care reports and documentation.
 3. No images taken by a member in the course and scope of their duties may be used, printed, copied, scanned, e-mailed, posted, shared, reproduced or distributed or used in a *negative, detrimental, demeaning, derogatory, controversial or confrontational way. Violations of this prohibition may be punishable by disciplinary action, upon due process by the fire company.*
 4. The use of unauthorized helmet cameras is strictly prohibited without prior authorization.
- C. The use of personal cell phones, photo/electronic communication devices, music devices etc may not be used without authorization when driving apparatus, responding to or at emergency incidents or at official public events or appearances.
- D. All members must understand that any media in their possession or originating from them may be subject to subpoena in a court of law.

By Order of Board of Fire Commissioners – Stillwater Fire District

Chairman Board of Fire Commissioners

Co-Signed by the President, Fire Company