

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

218.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the Amador Fire Protection District's social media program is to allow authorized employees of the fire district to provide our community with various content related to Amador Fire. Authorized employees are determined by the Fire Chief and his or her designee.

During major incidents, social media is used to simultaneously broadcast the facts to our community and journalists, helping to deliver the right information, to the right people, at the right time, so they can make informed decisions about public safety. Social media is not a replacement for the county-based emergency phone notifications, or wireless emergency alerts, but rather, a supplement to those services. During major incidents, proactive social media content creation will occur regularly.

This content may include topics related to Amador Fire's organizational mission, vision, values, goals, activities, events, investigation updates, general news, programs, risk reduction, recruitment, and interesting stories told through text, audio, photographs, and videos.

218.2 POSTING PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS ON OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Authorized employees may share photographs or videos captured at Amador Fire events, incidents, or training to enhance community engagement, risk reduction, and post-incident information releases. Visual content shall be checked for the following items prior to public release.

Safety: The general safety of the community and emergency responders should be evaluated and images/videos showing unsafe behavior should not be released. Appropriately highlighting safety concerns and sharing images depicting unsafe behavior to reduce risk or contribute to training may be considered under specific circumstances approved by the Fire Chief.

Policy: All images/videos shall be reviewed prior to their public release. Any visual media depicting policy violations will be reviewed by the Fire Chief or his or her designee prior to release for publication.

Reputation: All images/videos shall be reviewed for reputation-breaking behavior that otherwise is not unsafe and does not violate policy. For example, images of personnel smiling and laughing at the scene of a tragedy should not be shared on social media.

HIPAA: All images/videos shall be reviewed and deemed compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act prior to public release. Specifically, images and videos may not contain any of the 18 Protected Health Information (PHI) identifiers without the written permission of the patient or their guardian. Images/videos depicting the following items must be censored; patient names, dates related to the health or identity of individuals or their age, geographical elements such as street address, vehicle identifiers such as license plates or aircraft registration "N" numbers, full face photographic images or other information that may identify a patient.

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Investigations: All images/videos of fire scenes with causes deemed incendiary, suspicious, or under investigation, especially those captured outside of public view, shall be approved by the Fire Chief or his or her designee prior to public release. Images captured outside of public view, within private property, or where an expectation of privacy is reasonably assumed, should not be publicly released without approval from the Fire Marshal's Office and or the Fire Chief.

218.3 OFFICIAL AMADOR FIRE SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS OF USE

By posting or commenting on any social media platform used by Amador Fire Protection District, you participate by your own choice, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username, and any information you provide therein. You further agree to the following terms of use:

Limited Public Forum

All social media platforms used by Amador Fire are designated as Limited Public Forums. The fire district welcomes a person's right to express their opinion and encourages posters to keep comments relevant to the topic in question. Posting of any content on any social media platform used by Amador Fire, by any visitor, follower, subscriber, or fan, constitutes acceptance of the terms of use described in this policy.

For purposes of this policy, a social media platform is a website or app offered to the public to provide audio, video, still-photo, or written communication between other members of the public and/or representatives of certain groups, businesses, organizations, or departments. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, X, YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Nextdoor, TikTok, and LinkedIn, and or any social media platforms with commenting capabilities, forums, and emergency notification services. The definition of content as used in this policy refers to any written copy, photos, graphics, videos, live-video streams, comments, or any form of communicative content exchanged between parties.

Emergency or Non-Emergency Requests for Assistance

The posting of requests for assistance, regardless of whether they are emergency or non-emergency in nature, is discouraged and will not guarantee a response by Amador Fire Protection District or any emergency service provider. In case of an emergency please dial 911. If you wish to report a non-emergency incident, please call the Amador County Sheriff's Office dispatch at 209-223-6500. All non-incident-related commendations, complaints, inquiries, or requests should be made during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by calling the Amador Fire Headquarters at 209-223-6391 or anytime by visiting www.amadorfire.org

Endorsements

"Friending" or "liking" Amador Fire, or an employee of Amador Fire, does not indicate an official endorsement of that person's actions or comments. The Amador Fire Public Information Officer may "friend", "follow", or "subscribe" to social media accounts to receive timely updates from those content creators, and that action does not indicate an official endorsement of that person, organization, or the content they publicly post.

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A comment posted by a member of the public on any Amador Fire social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, Amador Fire, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of Amador Fire Protection District.

Moderation of Content

Amador Fire Protection District's social media platforms are intended to be family-friendly.

When applicable, Amador Fire uses platform-provided content moderation/filtering options to limit inappropriate or obscene content. Amador Fire does not actively monitor the social media platforms used by the district 24/7 but will remove inappropriate content as defined below, without prior notice, and as soon as possible. This material may include, but is not limited to:

- Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law.
- Posts suspected of content containing a virus or other computer security threat.
- Links to profane, obscene, or pornographic language, images, or content.
- Disclosure of personally identifiable information of any person, such as social security numbers, credit card numbers, addresses, email addresses, or telephone numbers.
- Profane language or content
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination of protected classes
- Sexual harassment content
- Solicitations of commerce or advertisements including promotion or endorsements
- Promotion or endorsement of political issues, groups, or individuals, unless such promotion or opposition is related to discussion of an item posted by Amador Fire
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content intended to defame any person, group or organization
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as trademark or copyright infringement
- Violent or threatening content
- Disclosure of confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information

Additionally, the original poster of user content may edit or delete their own content without Amador Fire's involvement. All user content is subject to the terms of service of the social media site on which they are posted. Amador Fire Public Information Officer(s) may disable the comments feature on Nextdoor for posts related to Board of Director communications. Public comments may be given in person at a scheduled meeting, or by emailing the directors at links provided on our website.

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Employee Personal Social Media Use

Employees are encouraged to repost and share information with their family and friends, such as official Amador Fire social media posts, photographs, and videos. News on our internal intranet should not be disseminated outside of the organization. The best way to share Amador Fire content is to link to the original source or "like" / subscribe to Amador Fire on official platforms and share official posts. Under no circumstances shall an employee share information that is not part of the public record, i.e., employee or patient information or any other information that may be deemed private or protected. As an Amador Fire employee you enjoy the public's trust, do not post or email anything that could damage that trust or diminish our professional reputation.

- Respect the privacy of coworkers on social media sites.
- You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others.
- The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred: Be thoughtful about your posting's content and potential audiences. Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as an Amador Fire employee. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of the Amador Fire.
- The First Amendment protects your right to freedom of speech but does not guarantee your employment at Amador Fire Protection District if you share comments that violate Amador Fire policy.
- There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. You do not know all the friends of your friends or their families, so remember that the audience you are posting to may not be the only audience that sees your post.
- If you use images/videos taken while working or at an Amador Fire function, use only those photos that are approved under the Amador Fire Social Media Policy.
- Do not use any form of the Amador Fire Protection District logo on your personal online sites.
- Do not use the Amador Fire Protection District name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate.
- Ask yourself, would I be okay if this were to be reprinted in the newspaper or aired on the evening news?