

Boston Fire Department Social Media Policy

Purpose of this policy

Social Media usage comes with a lot of responsibility. The proper usage may be beneficial to the user (employee) and the department. However, improper usage can have instant and long term damage to the perception of the department and the user.

Social Media

Social media is content created by individuals using technologies through the Internet. Examples of social media include Facebook, blogs (a shortened term for web log), MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, etc.

Potentially Damaging Usage of Social Media

Members of the Boston Fire Department shall not use:

- a. Profane language or content;
- b. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- c. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- d. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- e. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- f. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- g. Images and/or video from incidents which have not been cleared for usage by the department.

Usage While on Duty

Employees may utilize social media while on duty, while adhering to the department's and city's personnel operating policies.

Use of social media is not allowed when responding to and/or during an active incident. It is specifically forbidden to take any photographs and /or video of any person receiving medical care at an incident. In addition, it is specifically forbidden to take photographs and/or video at any fatal or possibly fatal incident.

Members assigned to specific positions within the department such as the Fire Investigation Unit or the Public Information Office may use social media at incidents in the course of their duties.

Photography and Videography

The use of cameras (still, cell and video) should not interfere with your role as a firefighter.

Information Dissemination

It is the role of the Public Information Officer (PIO) to disseminate information to the press and public. No employee shall be allowed to disseminate information to the press or public without express consent by the PIO. The department's official logo may not be used without written consent.