



# GENERAL ORDER

## GENERAL ORDER 100.21

### Social Media Policy

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Issue Date: November 5, 2012

Revision Date: June 22, 2015

#### 1 APPLICABILITY

2 All personnel.

#### 3 POLICY

4 Social media provides a valuable tool to reach a large number of people quickly and efficiently.  
5 As such, the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (Department) will use its  
6 official Social Media presence to provide time-sensitive notification related to fire incidents,  
7 special events, disasters, and other public emergencies.

8  
9 The Department will also use its official Social Media sites to aide in community outreach and  
10 education efforts, and assist in the communication of fire safety advice, medical  
11 recommendations, recognition, success stories, and statistics.

#### 12 DEFINITIONS

13 ➤ None

#### 14 PROCEDURES

15 This General Order serves as an adjunct to the County's Social Media Policy, Howard County  
16 Policy and Procedure 400.3: Social Media Policy (Revised 1/22/2015). The Department's social  
17 media presence will be administered by the Department's Public Information Office (PIO).  
18 Personnel are encouraged to submit photos, videos, articles and other materials internally for  
19 posting on the Department's public social media sites. These items can be directly submitted to  
20 the PIO.

21  
22 Department personnel have the right to use social media; however, all personnel are prohibited  
23 from accessing personal social media sites while on duty if such access interferes with the  
24 performance of assigned duties. It is important to remember that misconduct of any type,  
25 regardless of whether it occurs on social media, is governed by General Order 100.22: Code of  
26 Conduct.

27  
28 The use of personal recording devices such as cameras, video recorders, helmet cameras, audio  
29 recorders, cell phones or any device with audio and video recorder applications are prohibited



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30 while at any incident scene without prior approval of the Chief of the Department or designee.  
31 Personnel assigned to the PIO, Office of the Fire Marshal, Bureau of Education & Training, as  
32 well as Operational Field Battalion Chiefs, Medical Duty Officers, and Safety Officers may  
33 authorize the use of such devices for the official use of the Department. Members of the  
34 Department shall not post photo images, video, or audio of any incident scene or patient  
35 information on any social media site.

## 36 REFERENCES

- 37 • Department General Order 100.22: Code of Conduct.
- 38 • Howard County Police and Procedure 400.4: Social Media Policy (Revised 1/22/2015).

## 39 SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT CHANGES

40 Removed employee misconduct provisions. Misconduct issues will continue to be addressed by  
41 GO 100.22: Code of Conduct.

## 42 FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

- 43 • None

## 44 APPROVED

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