**OKOLONA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Okolona Fire Protection District (hereinafter OFPD) endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication and information exchange between OFPD members, employees and trustees. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media rather social media in general as advancing technology far outpaces the ability to create policies governing social media use.

**DEFINITIONS**

*Blog:* A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments.

*Post:* Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

*Profile:* Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

*Social Media:* A category of Internet based resources that enable the user to generate content and encourage other user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites: Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, Vine, Instagram, blogs, email and any and all other sites of a similar or like nature.

*Social Networks:* Platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

*Speech:* Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

*Member:* “Member" shall include the chief and all officers; all firefighters, including volunteer, paid, regular, junior firefighters, auxiliary membersand special firefighters; and all employees of a fire department, a fire protection district, or of a volunteer fire department.

*Disciplinary Action:* Shall include those actions allowed to be taken pursuant to KRS 75.130, KRS 75.140 and including the definitional section of KRS Chapter 75 (KRS 75.100). Any such disciplinary action taken pursuant to this policy shall be in strict accordance with this policy.

*Board of Trustees:* "Board" means the board of trustees of a fire protection district organized under KRS 75.010 to 75.080 and the governing board of a volunteer fire department.

**SOCIAL MEDIA USE AUTHORIZED BY OFPD**

The use of OFPD owned or utilized computers or other OFPD owned or utilized internet accessible electronic devices by members, trustees or employees to access social media is prohibited without prior written authorization from the Chief, Officer in Command or the Board of Trustees. All members, trustees or employees are given notice that social media use relating to OFPD owned or utilized computers or other internet accessible devices is subject to Kentucky Open Records Laws.

If allowed to utilize social media, OFPD members, trustees or employees shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of OFPD, shall adhere to OFPD standards of conduct, identify themselves as a member, trustees or employee of OFPD, not conduct political activities or private business, and observe all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

OFPD members, trustees or employees shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to OFPD training, activities, or work-related assignments without express prior written permission from the Chief upon consultation with the Board of Trustees. Any such written authorization shall be specific to that incident only and the written authorization shall clearly detail what shall be released. The written authorization shall have an expiration date.

All members, trustees or employees are on notice that OFPD will utilize social media to screen new applicants for OFPD membership as well as use social media to form the basis for disciplinary action against any OFPD member or employee.

**PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

Members, trustees or employees are prohibited from using any form of social media for personal use at any time when conducting any business for OFPD. This includes (but is not limited to) emergency runs of any type, trainings, office work, volunteer time at any OFPD event, employee time at any OFPD event, all time spent at any property owned or used by OFPD and all time spent while in or on any vehicle or apparatus owned or used by OFPD.

It is not the intention of this section to preclude the on duty use of social media that may increase a member, trustee or employees knowledge of subjects that are of benefit to the fire district.

It is permissible to reasonably utilize social media for personal purposes using OFPD equipment during breaks and free time. To this end, members , trustees or employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of OFPD, create conflict between members, trustees or employees or negatively affect the public perception of OFPD.

OFPD members, trustees or employees shall not display OFPD logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages without prior permission from the Chief or Board of Trustees.

OFPD members, trustees or employees shall not post any information containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals.

OFPD members, trustees or employees shall not divulge information gained by reason of their authority, make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of OFPD without prior written express authorization.

OFPD members, trustees or employees should be aware that they may be personally subject to outside civil litigation and/or criminal prosecution for publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization otherwise known as defamation to include: publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person; using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.

**DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY**

Any OFPD member, trustee or employee that is aware of or has knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of this policy shall notify their supervisor and/or a Board of Trustees representative immediately for follow-up action. Violation of this policy could result in termination and all disciplinary actions shall be prosecuted pursuant to KRS 75.130.

*This policy was adopted by the Okolona Fire Protection District Board of Trustees on August 1, 2013 after a motion, second for the motion, discussion and a majority vote in favor of the motion.*

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Chairperson – Board of Trustees DATE

Okolona Fire Protection District