

Rules of Engagement/Standard operating procedure

U.S. MARINE CORPS SOCIAL MEDIA

Purpose: To clearly state the rules governing the use of social media networks for Public Affairs personnel and to set a standard of response to public inquiries posted on social media sites in use by the U.S. Marine Corps.

Method of engagement: Marines appointed to social media will actively engage key publics on designated social networks through intentional communication, unity of voice, freedom of information, timeliness and accuracy while maintaining security and privacy to strengthen organizational credibility.

Building credibility/public trust: everything we do (credibility) balances on public trust. This is the foundation upon which the success of public affairs and social media is built. Trust must be given freely, it cannot be mandated. Although social media will have a direct effect on public trust, public trust cannot be controlled through social media. Some of the key elements of building trust to be considered when posting content or maintaining a social network site:

1. Be open with the public when declaring what our Corps values and principles are.
2. Provide a means for direct invitation of key publics to engage in dialogue (and potentially contrasts or principles).
3. Develop methods of engagement to maintain dialogue with key publics.
4. Deliberate mirror imaging of actions and the information we communicate.
5. Take certain risks with negative public statements and allow for a public forum (your fans) to defend your position.
6. Do not over moderate social media networks to the point of disrupting freedom of information and public opinion.
7. Manage the Corps' reputation and relationships built on social networks (by ensuring there are adequate methods to maintain decorum, rules of engagement and site/content moderation).
8. Provide full disclosure of who you are when engaging in the social media network.

Guidance for Marines

Marines / Marine Corps units, Commanders, etc. engaging social media should use their best judgment when posting and responding to topics on social media sites. For example:

1. Post only approved content. Have a method in place to ensure thorough content review before posting – being mindful of OPSEC, FOUO, FOIA, SAPP, etc.
2. Respond to all necessary topics and comments. This is an opportunity to leverage the tools for what they are – a means of solid communication. Avoid the tendency to defend and protect every comment made though. Given time, social networks normally self correct negative aspects. Let users explain and work out the issues and ideas being expressed.
3. Do not stray from negative comments. An open forum comes with certain risk of negativity and to shy from it will tarnish credibility. However, responses must be vetted / approved and accurately express the Corps' position without editorializing or straying from the facts.
4. Allow your fans to fight your battles for you, as well, when possible. They are, by virtue of their nature, not the official Corps' responders and, as such, carry with them a different level of credibility.
5. Replace error or misrepresentations of the Corps with fact not argument, immediately.
6. Stay in your lane. Do not comment on what you do not know.
7. No endorsements. Do not use the Marine Corps' name to promote products, opinions or causes other than those already officially endorsed by the Marine Corps.
8. Admit mistakes.

9. If uncertain whether a response is necessary refer to higher for guidance
10. Only delete or block comments or users when a clear pattern of malicious, derogatory behavior is apparent and they are in violation of the terms of participation.
11. Keep a log of all malicious material which has been deleted.
12. All discussion boards and comments must be closely monitored but not over moderated.
13. Follow all applicable DoD, SecNav and Marine Corps rules and regulations with regard to social media.
Units are directed to provide a link to the following basic policy statement on any social networking sites on which they host content/pages, etc. These rules will be posted on each social media site engaged by the Marine Corps to preserve credibility and clearly state to users our ground rules.

Terms of participation to be posted on sites:

Welcome, this is the official U.S. Marine Corps (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr) for (UNIT) where you will find the most recent information and news about (UNIT). It is our goal to provide the public with information and news about (UNIT) and allow for an open forum of discussion about (UNIT) topics.

If you are looking for our official web page please visit (OFFICIAL UNIT .MIL) or <http://www.marines.mil>

Please feel free to express your opinion about the Marine Corps in an objective and respectful way that allows for a continued information relationship.

While this is an open forum, it's also intended to maintain respect for those who participate (i.e. family-friendly). Please keep your comments clean.

Participants are asked to follow our posting guidelines below. Violation of the guidelines below may result in your post being removed.

Posting Guidelines:

We do not under any circumstance allow graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization.

We do not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, we do not allow attempts to defame or defraud any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency.

We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.

You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.

Lastly, the appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps or Department of Defense.