

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">New Hartford Fire Department Best Practice Guidelines</h2>	
	<p>Operations/ Safety</p>	
	<p>Policy #</p>	<p>Issued:</p>

**Subject:** SOCIAL NETWORKING / MEDIA

**Purpose:** The purpose of this guideline is to define the use of social media by all New Hartford Fire Department members. Social media/networking sites of any kind, whether now existing or created in the future, including but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and any and all types of forums and public comment areas, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards and on and offline forums, including letters and writings shall apply to this guideline.

**Scope:** This guideline applies to all personnel of the New Hartford Fire Department and does not attempt to curb the actual speech of an individual, except in certain circumstances.

No member of the NHFD shall harass or threaten any individual. Harassment shall be investigated and disciplined in accordance with the departments by-laws.

No NHFD member, while speaking as a private citizen on a matter of public concern, shall speak in such a manner that causes actual harm to or disruption of Department operations.

The Chief or chain of command will designate a sole information officer to represent the NHFD in regards to making public statements in any forum, whether on a computer or not.

Any member of the NHFD making any comment about the Fire Dept., Fire Dept. business, Fire Dept. business partners or any individual shall identify themselves by their proper legal name when making such comment and shall not utilize a fictitious name.

The New Hartford Fire Department strongly urges individuals not to make negative public comments about the Fire Dept., or Fire Dept.'s business or practices, or any individuals. Any individual who makes any comment about any other individual as defined herein which in any way related to or is related with the NHFD shall state affirmatively **"This statement was not made with the authority of or on behalf of the New Hartford Fire Department and represents only the personal views of the maker of this statement"**. Failure to attach this statement to any writing, document or posting may result in discipline, up to and including termination. Any individual who posts any comment whatsoever about the NHFD or any individual shall identify themselves and shall not hide behind any fictitious name.

No member of the NHFD shall make any comment about any non-public business matters of the NHFD or of any confidential or propriety matter. No member of the NHFD may discuss in any detail any call or response, or in any way identify any patient or emergency. No details about any pending business matters may be disclosed.

No member of the NHFD is protected against disciplinary action when the member provides false or deceptive information to the Department or members of the public.

The NHFD's network and computers shall not be utilized to create or issue comments on any social network about the NHFD's, volunteers, directors, customers, contracts or business except as specifically permitted by the Chief or chain of command. The NHFD's network and computers shall not be utilized to make any negative comments about the NHFD business or practices in any manner or to send threatening or harassing or defamatory emails or messages of any sort.

Examples of unprotected speech may include, but are not limited to, any actions that would constitute harassment, hate speech, the dissemination of protected or confidential information, speech which contains libelous, slanderous, inflammatory, misguided or misleading statements.