



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE AIR GROUND TASK FORCE TRAINING COMMAND
MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER
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POLICY LETTER 11-21

From: Commanding General
To: All Hands

Subj: SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

Ref: (a) <https://www.marines.mil/News/Social-Media/>

Encl: (1) Social Media Best Practices

1. Purpose. Continued expansion and use of social media and web-based interactive technologies requires due diligence and oversight to ensure the operational security of Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, (MAGTFTC), Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC). Service members and their families are our first line of defense when it comes to navigating the risks associated with social media. They require the training, understanding, and tools necessary to secure important information while using social media as a forum to share news and events.

a. Headquarters Marine Corps has created a website that provides information regarding social media and a collection of official Marine Corps social platforms. The link provided by the reference has useful information for Marines and their families concerning existing rules for public affairs and personal conduct while utilizing social media.

b. Social media includes collaborative tools such as social networking sites, user-generated content, social software, email, instant messaging, and internet discussion forums (e.g. YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok, QQ, Telegram, Pinterest, Reddit, etc.).

2. Cancellation. MAGTFTC, MCAGCC Policy Letter 11-20.

3. Information. The enclosure provides best practices for the use of social media and reduces the risk to Marines, their families, and operational security that may arise from its use.

4. Action. Commanders, Assistant Chiefs of Staff, Special Staff Officers, and Officers-in-Charge will ensure their Marines, Sailors, civilians, and contract personnel are informed of the best practices listed in the enclosure. Unit's Family Readiness Command Team (FRCT) will also disseminate recommended best practices to Combat Center Family members. Marines are strongly encouraged to ensure their family members follow these best practices.

5. The points of contact are the Communication Strategy & Operations (COMMSTRAT) Officer at (760) 830-5310; Mr. Mark D. Ziobro at (760) 830-4737 or mark.d.ziobro@usmc.mil; and Mr. Jeffrey L. Faughn at (760) 830-0099 or Jeffrey.faughn@usmc.mil.


A. E. RENFORTH

DISTRIBUTION: A

Social Media Best Practices

1. The Marine Corps respects the free speech rights of all Marines and Sailors, but everyone must remember that civilians, fellow Marines/Sailors, and supervisors often have access to online posted content. Marines and Sailors must keep this in mind when publishing information online and know that information originally intended just for friends and family can be forwarded on. Online content could be shared with thousands or more people and is nearly impossible to retract once it has entered the public arena.

a. Profile Information/Status Updates

- (1) Keep sensitive, work-related information OFF your profile.
- (2) Keep your plans, schedules, and location data to yourself.
- (3) Protect the names and information of coworkers, friends, and family members (use first names).
- (4) Adhere to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and other applicable policies, to include Personally Identifiable Information.
- (5) Exercise sound judgement and common sense. Marines and Sailors are responsible for their actions. Anything a Marine, Sailor or individual posts that can potentially tarnish the Marine Corps' image will ultimately be their responsibility.

b. Posted Data

- (1) Check all photos for indicators in the background or reflective surfaces.
- (2) Check (properties) filenames and file tags for sensitive data (your name, organization, or other details).
- (3) Remove Geo tagging information from your posted photos.
- (4) Tell friends to be careful when posting photos and information about you and your family.
- (5) Be a "scout" for compliments and criticism. Even if a Marine or Sailor is not an official online spokesperson, they are one of the most vital assets for monitoring the social media landscape. If positive remarks about the Marine Corps are discovered online they should consider sharing it with their local or command Communications Strategy and Operations Office (COMMSTRAT).
- (6) Let subject matter experts respond to negative posts. You may come across negative or disparaging posts about the Marine Corps or see third parties initiating negative conversations. Unless you are a trained Marine Corps online spokesperson, avoid the temptation to react yourself. Pass the post(s) along to official spokespersons that are authorized to address such comments at the unit or command COMMSTRAT.

c. Settings and Privacy

- (1) Carefully look for and set all your privacy and security options on the web browser and social media site.

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(2) Determine both your profile and search visibility.

(3) Sort "friends" into groups and networks, and set access permissions accordingly.

(4) Verify through other channels that a "friend" request was actually from your friend.

(5) Do not add "untrusted" people. If they must be added, only add them to the group with the lowest access permissions or do not add them at all. Refer suspicious friend requests or peculiar requests for information to the operations security manager or information management officer.

d. Security

(1) Keep your anti-virus software updated.

(2) Beware of links, downloads, and attachments just as you would in emails.

(3) Beware of "apps" or plugins, which are often written by unknown third parties who might use them to access your data and friends.

(4) Look for HTTPS (within the address bar) and the lock icon that indicate active transmission security before logging in or entering sensitive data (especially when using Wi-Fi hotspots).

e. Passwords

(1) Use unique passwords for each online site you use.

(2) Ensure your passwords are sufficiently difficult to guess.

(3) Do not share your passwords with anyone.

2. Official MAGTF/TC, MCAGCC Social Media

a. All Official MAGTF/TC, MCAGCC Social Media will have the following information posted on their sites:

(1) It is our goal to provide information and news about the [Respective Unit] as well as an open forum of discussion about Marine Corps related topics. Your opinions and feedback are welcome so long as they are presented in an objective and respectful way that allows for a continued information relationship.

(2) While this site provides an open forum, participants are reminded to maintain respect for all users (i.e. family-friendly). Please keep your comments clean.

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

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

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(b) We do not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial, or non-governmental agency.

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

(d) We do not allow posts that would affect the force protection or operational security of our Service members and their loved ones.

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

(4) 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.

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