**Marine Barracks Washington, D.C. Public Affairs**

**Social Media Guidance**

* **BACKGROUND:** In today’s complex and decentralized information environment, the Marine Corps recognizes the value of Marines sharing their experience of service via social media. The Marine Corps encourages its personnel to engage in social media communities while remaining mindful of propriety, personal privacy and operational security considerations. The social media handbook outlines the Corps’ social media principles to empower Marines to participate with our social media community. The intent is to engage in greater discussion as even better communicators and improved representatives of our Corps. The handbook, combined with other references available on Marines.mil’s social media page, helps guide and assist commanders’ and Marines’ activities relative to the social/online environment.
* **GENERAL GUIDANCE:**
  + Marines are personally responsible for all content they publish on social networking sites, blogs, or other websites. Use your best judgment at all times and keep in mind how the content of your posts will reflect upon yourselves, your unit, and the Marine Corps.
  + Marines are responsible for adhering to Federal law, Marine Corps regulations and governing policies when making unofficial Internet posts. Marines must abide by certain restrictions and policy to ensure good order and discipline. Federal law, regulations and policies that directly impact a Marine's conduct mandate personal standards of conduct, operational security, information assurance, release of personally identifiable information, ethics regulations, and the release of information to the public. A Marine who violates Federal law, regulations or policies through inappropriate personal online activity is subject to disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).
  + Marines who communicate online about the Marine Corps in unofficial Internet posts may identify themselves as Marines, to include their rank, military component (e.g., Captain Smith, USMC), and status (active or reserve) if desired.
  + When expressing personal opinions, Marines should make clear that they are speaking for themselves and not on behalf of the Marine Corps. Use a disclaimer such as: "the postings on this site are my own and don't represent Marine Corps' positions or opinions."
  + Marines should not participate in offensive and inappropriate behavior that could bring discredit upon themselves and the Marine Corps. This behavior includes posting any defamatory, libelous, obscene, abusive, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.
  + Marines shall not post classified, controlled unclassified information (CUI), or sensitive information (for example, tactics, troop movements, force size, weapon system details, etc). When in doubt, Marines should contact the unit operations officer, security officer, intelligence officer, or public affairs officer for guidance.
  + Marines should not post information that would infringe upon the privacy, proprietary, or personal rights of others.
  + The posting or disclosure of internal Marine Corps documents or information that the Marine Corps has not officially released to the public is prohibited. This policy applies no matter how a Marine comes into possession of a document. Examples include, but are not limited to, memos, e-mails, meeting notes, message traffic, white papers, public affairs guidance, pre-decisional materials, investigatory information, and proprietary information. Marines are also prohibited from releasing Marine Corps e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, or fax numbers not already authorized for public release.
  + Marines should only discuss Marine Corps issues related to their professional expertise, personal experiences, or personal knowledge.
  + Marines are encouraged to professionally and respectfully correct errors and misrepresentations made, by others, about the Marine Corps. Marines must remember however, to respond and act with their minds and not their emotions when posting content. Marines should refer to the chain of command or public affairs for guidance if uncertain about the need for or appropriateness of a response.
* Any allegations of a violation of these standards will be thoroughly investigated and handled at the appropriate judicial or administrative forum. A Marine could potentially be charged for violating Article 133 (for officers) or Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). If a Marine shared a photo of another person that was taken without that person’s consent and under circumstances in which that other person had a reasonable expectation of privacy, the Marine may have violated Article 120c, UCMJ, for broadcasting or distribution of an indecent visual recording. A Marine who directly participates in, encourages, or condones such actions could also be subjected to criminal proceedings or adverse administrative actions. A Marine also risks administrative separation that carries with it the possibility of an other than honorable characterization.

* **TALKING POINTS:**
  + The command takes every allegation of misconduct seriously and we will hold individuals responsible for discriminatory and discrediting actions.   
    - We expect Marines to speak up and speak out when it comes to any behavior that seeks to demean or degrade others. Silence is consent.
  + The social media handbook does not restrict a Marine’s right to freedom of speech, but rather advises Marines how their comments can be used by the media or others, making them de facto spokespersons for the Marine Corps
  + The Marine Corps encourages its personnel to engage in social media communities using sound judgment and common sense, adhering to the Marine Corps’ core values of honor, courage and commitment, following established policy, and abiding by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).
  + The Marine Corps respects the rights of its Marines to use social media platforms as a form of ethical self-expression, and also as a means to further share our Marine Corps’ story.
  + Consistent with personal privacy and operational security considerations, Marines should only discuss Marine Corps issues related to their own professional expertise, personal experience, or personal knowledge.
  + Commanders are responsible to educate their Marines, civilians, contractors, and family members on the benefit of routinely reviewing their online and social media presence and behavior.
  + Marines and civilian personnel must ensure their social media/online footprint and habits do not compromise their personal or operational security.
* **REFERENCES:**   
  1. Marine Corps Order 5720.77: <http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%205720.77.pdf>
  2. Marine Corps Social Media Homepage: <http://www.marines.mil/News/SocialMedia.aspx>
  3. Marine Corps Social Media Handbook: <http://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/61/Docs/Social-Media-Handbook%20REVISED.pdf>
  4. Helpful Facebook Tips: <http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Docs/FacebookGuideMilitaryOrgs%5B1%5D.pdf>

**\*For further information please contact the MBW PA Office: 202-433-6660**