



Service Standard 1.4.5

Social Media

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The NSW RFS acknowledges social media as an effective form of communicating with the community and members.
- 1.2 The NSW RFS encourages its members to responsibly utilise social media as a communication and engagement tool.
- 1.3 This Service Standard establishes standards and guidelines for all NSW RFS members with regard to social media usage, and the posting of any content on any social media site that may reflect on the image or reputation of the NSW RFS.
- 1.4 The NSW RFS has developed this Service Standard to facilitate a consistent approach to the use of social media within the Service.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Social media:** media designed to be disseminated through conversation and social interaction, utilising internet based technologies and channels. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, forums and blogs.
- 2.2 **Social media presence:** a specific account or page on a social media channel run by a brigade, business unit or an individual. Examples include a Facebook page or a Youtube channel.
- 2.3 **Service-related or official use:** any representation or communication in relation to the NSW RFS or its business, policies or activities on behalf of a brigade, district, team, zone, region, business unit of the Service, or by a member in an official capacity (eg a manager establishing a channel to communicate with members).
- 2.4 **Personal purposes:** any representation or communication in relation to the NSW RFS which has not been officially recognised by a brigade, district, team, zone, region or business unit or the Service.
- 2.5 **Members:** includes all NSW RFS volunteers and salaried staff, and for the purposes of this document, also includes contract, temporary and seasonal staff.

- 2.6 Brigades and Business Units:** includes NSW RFS brigades, groups of brigades, district, team, zone, regional and head office business units.
- 2.7 Identifiable as a member of the NSW RFS:** posts, images, details, content or other references which would allow a reasonable person to infer that an individual is a member of the NSW RFS. This may include, but is not limited to:
- (a) profile pictures or online photo albums depicting a member in NSW RFS uniform or personal protective clothing or equipment (PPC/PPE);
 - (b) employment or brigade membership details;
 - (c) reference to NSW RFS rank or role;
 - (d) displaying the NSW RFS crest or other NSW RFS imagery; and/or
 - (e) posts or other details that refer to NSW RFS business, policy or activities from a member's perspective or with information not available to non-members.

3. Policy

- 3.1** Members using social media in a Service related manner or an official capacity are reminded that social media is a form of broad public communication and as such, members are accountable for any content they post on a social media channel that has a bearing on the NSW RFS.
- 3.2** Members must be mindful of the information they post on public forums because it may impact on the reputation of the NSW RFS. Members should not post information on social media which could:
- (a) be misleading or deceptive;
 - (b) result in victimisation or harassment;
 - (c) lead to criminal penalty or civil liability;
 - (d) divulge confidential or sensitive information;
 - (e) reasonably be found to be vexatious, offensive, obscene, threatening, abusive, defamatory or culturally insensitive; or
 - (f) be interpreted to be of a commercial or political nature.
- 3.3** Members of the NSW RFS should declare any conflicts of interest (in accordance with [Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)) they have in matters arising on any social media channel in which they participate.
- 3.4** All NSW RFS members are to act at all times in accordance with the:
- (a) *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*; and
 - (b) all NSW RFS Service Standards.
- 3.5** Any breaches of this Service Standard may be subject to action in accordance with [Service Standard 1.1.2 Discipline](#).

- 3.6** In accordance with [Service Standard 1.1.19 Intellectual Property](#), members must ensure that they do not infringe on copyright or intellectual property by publishing photographs, videos or other content via online channels unless consent has been received from the owner of the content.
- 3.7** Any member wishing to use the NSW RFS crest as their display picture or avatar on any social media channel (eg Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc) are reminded to do so in accordance with [Service Standard 1.4.2 Corporate Visual Identity](#). This does not prevent the posting of images containing the crest incidentally, e.g. on personal protective clothing or vehicles.
- 3.8** Members are encouraged to post content such as videos and images to social media channels. In order to preserve the good name and reputation of the NSW RFS, images and/or videos should not be posted which:
- (a)** bring the NSW RFS into disrepute;
 - (b)** could reasonably be found to breach the NSW RFS Code of Conduct;
 - (c)** are not consistent with the NSW RFS Organisational Values;
 - (d)** depicts the NSW RFS in an unprofessional light;
 - (e)** could reasonably be found to be crude, threatening, vulgar, obscene or pornographic;
 - (f)** encourages improper safety, operational or work related practices;
 - (g)** portrays content of a confidential or sensitive nature such as serious or critical injury, fatalities or incidents that are under investigation;
 - (h)** could reasonably be found to cause distress to members of the community or the NSW RFS; and/or
 - (i)** identify people under the age of 18 without written parental consent.

Social media use for Service-related purposes

- 3.9** Members are encouraged to ensure that detailed or technical discussions of NSW RFS business, policy and activities take place in a private discussion board (such as a closed forum or Facebook group), and is restricted to members of the NSW RFS and kindred agencies and not be viewable by members of the public.
- 3.10** Members, brigades and business units using social media in a Service-related or official capacity should be aware that any social media presence can be seen as official communication from the NSW RFS.
- 3.11** Members, brigades and business units using social media in a Service-related or official capacity must ensure that any content:
- (a)** complies with NSW RFS Service Standards;
 - (b)** is regularly monitored;

- (c) is regularly updated;
 - (d) is accurate;
 - (e) is not in conflict with official policy of the NSW RFS; and
 - (f) is consistent with current organisational messages.
- 3.12 Members, brigades and business units using social media in a Service-related or official capacity are to appoint an administrator of the account, who will be the point of contact in the event of any content issues.
- 3.13 Administrators of Service-related or official accounts are encouraged to register the channel by emailing social.media@rfs.nsw.gov.au.
- 3.14 Online Communications will manage a register of links to Service-related or official accounts which will be published on the NSW RFS public website and used to promote the efforts of members engaging in the appropriate use of social media.
- 3.15 In the event that content posted on a social media channel breaches this or any other Service Standard, NSW RFS Online Communications, after consultation with the relevant manager or director, may request the manager or authoriser of the account to remove content or the account, and may remove the account from the published register.

Social media use for personal purposes

- 3.16 Members who use social media channels to discuss NSW RFS activities should do so in a responsible manner.
- 3.17 Any member who is clearly identifiable as a member of the NSW RFS through their personal social media presence is encouraged to provide a disclaimer stating that material posted is not the view of the NSW RFS.
- 3.18 Members using social media in a personal capacity are reminded that despite a disclaimer, there is the potential for content to be seen as being on behalf of the NSW RFS and members should exercise discretion with content posted.
- 3.19 Members of staff using social media in a personal capacity should exercise discretion with content posted and are reminded of their responsibilities under [Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct](#) and any Government directives.
- 3.20 Any member using social media in a personal capacity is required to:
- (a) conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the NSW RFS Code of Conduct and the NSW RFS Organisational Values; and
 - (b) comply with relevant sections of this Service Standard or any other Service Standard.

4. Links

- [Service Standard 1.1.6 Media](#)
- [Service Standard 1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics Service Standard](#)

- [Service Standard 1.1.14 Personal Information and Privacy](#)
- [Service Standard 1.1.2 Discipline](#)
- [Service Standard 1.1.19 Intellectual Property](#)
- [Service Standard 1.4.2 Corporate Visual Identity](#)
- Policy P5.1.6 Records Management
- [Government Information \(Public Access\) Act 2009 \(GIPA Act\)](#)
- [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#)
- [Rural Fires Act \(NSW\) 1997](#)
- [State Records Act 1998](#)
- [Coroners Act \(NSW\) 2009](#)
- [State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989](#)
- NSW Government Social Media Model Guidelines
- NSW RFS social media toolkit

5. Who is responsible for implementing the Service Standard?

- Director Executive Services

6. Amendments

- Initial release

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