

**LAKWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

SOG NUMBER: 100.03	RULE & REGULATION
DATE IMPLEMENTED: JUNE 13, 2022 DATE REVISED:	TITLE: COMMUNICATION MEDIA

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this provision is to establish a policy regarding the use of electronic communication by all personnel of Lakewood Township Fire District No. 1 and its Fire Department.

It will be the policy of the Fire District that all personnel conduct themselves in a professional manner when using electronic communication. All personnel will adhere to existing federal, state, and local laws when it comes to electronic communication.

SCOPE:

This provision shall apply to all Paid and Volunteer personnel of the Fire District and its Fire Department.

DEFINITIONS:

1. For purposes of this policy “employees” includes all paid and volunteer members of the Fire District and its Fire Department.
2. For purposes of this policy, “Communication Media” includes all electronic media forms provided by the Lakewood Fire District, such as cell phones, smart phones, computers, electronic tablets, access to the internet, voicemail, email, and fax.
3. For purposes of this policy, “Data” includes electronically-stored files, programs, tables, data bases, audio and video objects, spreadsheets, reports and printed or microfiche materials which serve a Lakewood Fire District business purpose, regardless of who creates, processes or maintains the data, or whether the data is processed manually or through any of the Fire Districts mainframe, midrange or workstations; servers, routers, gateways, bridges, hubs, switches and other hardware components of the Lakewood Fire Districts local or wide-area networks.

GENERAL:

1. Lakewood Fire District Communication Media are the property of the Lakewood Fire District and, as such, are to be used for legitimate business purposes only.
2. All data stored on and/or transmitted through Communication Media is the property of the Lakewood Fire District.

3. The Lakewood Fire District respects the individual privacy of its employees. However, employee communications transmitted by the Lakewood Fire District Communication Media are not private to the individual. All Communication Media and all communications and stored information transmitted, received, or contained in or through such media may be monitored by the Lakewood Fire District. The Lakewood Fire District reserves the absolute right to access, review, audit and disclose all matters entered into, sent over, placed in storage in the Lakewood Fire District Communication Media.
4. By using Lakewood Fire District equipment and/or Communication Media, employees consent to have such use monitored at any time, with or without notice by Lakewood Fire District personnel. The existence of passwords does not restrict or eliminate the Fire Districts ability or right to access electronic communications. However, the Lakewood Fire District cannot require the employee to provide its password to his/her personal account.
5. All email, voicemail, and Internet messages (including any technology-based messaging) are official documents subject to the provisions of the Open Public Records Act (N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1). Employees of the Lakewood Fire District are required to use the assigned Lakewood Fire District email account for ALL Lakewood Fire District business and correspondence. The use of private email accounts for ANY Lakewood Fire District business is strictly prohibited.
6. Employees can only use Lakewood Fire District Communication Media for legitimate business purposes. Employees may not use Lakewood Fire District Communication Media in any way that is defamatory, obscene, or harassing or in violation of any Fire District rules or policy. Examples of forbidden transmissions or downloads include sexually-explicit messages; unwelcome propositions; ethnic or racial slurs; or any other message that can be construed to be harassment or disparaging to others based on their actual or perceived age, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, marital status or any other legally recognized protected basis under federal, state or local laws, regulations or ordinances.
7. All employees, who have been granted access to electronically stored data, must use a logon ID assigned by the Lakewood Fire District. Certain data, or applications that process data, may require additional security measures as determined by the Lakewood Fire District. Employees must not share their passwords; and each employee is responsible for all activity that occurs in connection with their passwords.
8. All employees may access only data for which the Lakewood Fire District has given permission. All employees must take appropriate actions to ensure that Lakewood Fire District data is protected from unauthorized access, use or distribution consistent with these policies. Employees may not access or retrieve any information technology resource and store information other than where authorized.
9. Employees must not disable anti-virus and other implemented security software for any reason, in order to minimize the risk of introducing computer viruses into the Lakewood Fire District computing environment.
10. Employees may not install ANY hardware device, software application, program code, either active or passive, or a portion thereof, without the express written permission from the Lakewood

Fire District. Employees may not upload, download, or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to parties outside of the Fire District, or licensed to the Lakewood Fire District. Employees shall observe the copyright and licensing restrictions of all software applications and shall not copy software from internal or external sources unless legally authorized.

11. Social Media and its uses in public service and daily life are expanding each year however, information posted on a website is available to the public; therefore, employees must adhere to the following guidelines for their participation in social media. Only those Employees directly authorized by the Fire District Administrator or his/her designee may engage in social media activity during work time using Lakewood Fire District Communication Media, as it directly relates to their work, and it is in compliance with this policy.
12. Employees must not reveal or publicize confidential Fire District information. Confidential proprietary or sensitive information may be disseminated only to individuals with a need and a right to know, and where there is sufficient assurance that appropriate security of such information will be maintained. Such information includes but is not limited to the transmittal of personnel information such as medical records or related information.
13. No District employee shall post internal working documents to social media sites. This includes, but is not limited to, screenshots of computer stations, pictures of monitors and/or actual documents themselves without the prior approval of the Fire District Administrator or his/her designee. In addition, employees are prohibited from releasing or disclosing any photographs, pictures, digital images of any fire scenes, crime scenes, traffic crashes, people or job-related incident or occurrence taken with Fire District Communication Media to any person, entity, business or media or Internet outlet whether on or off duty without the express written permission of the Chief of Department. Except in “emergency situations,” employees are prohibited from taking digital images or photographs with media equipment not owned by the Fire District.
 - For purposes of this section, an “emergency situation” involves a sudden and unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action, assistance, or relief, and may include accidents, crimes and flights from accidents or crimes and the employee does not have access to Fire District Communication Media. If such situation occurs, employee agrees that any images belong to the Lakewood Fire District and agree to release the image to the Fire District and ensure its permanent deletion from media device upon direction from the Fire District.
14. No media advertisement, electronic bulletin board posting, or any other communication accessible via the Internet about the Lakewood Fire District or on behalf of the Lakewood Fire District, whether using Fire District Communication Media or otherwise, may be issued unless it has first been approved by the Fire District Administrator or his/her designee. Under no circumstances may information of a confidential, sensitive, or otherwise proprietary nature be placed or posted on the Internet or otherwise disclosed to anyone outside the Lakewood Fire District. Such unauthorized communications may result in disciplinary action.
15. Authorized postings placed on the Internet through use of Lakewood Fire District Communication Media will display Lakewood Fire District return address, any information posted on the Internet must reflect and adhere to all the Lakewood Fire District standards and policies.

16. All users are personally accountable for messages that they originate or forward using Lakewood Fire Districts Communication Media. Misrepresenting, obscuring, suppressing, or replacing a user's identity on any Communication Media is prohibited. "Spoofing" (constructing electronic communications so that it appears to be from someone else) without a legitimate authorized purpose and authorized by the Fire District Administrator or his/her designee is prohibited.
17. Employees must respect the laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, rights of the public, the Lakewood Fire District, and other third-party rights. Any use of the Lakewood Fire Districts name, logos, service marks or trademarks outside the course of the employee's employment, without the express consent of the Lakewood Fire District, is strictly prohibited. To minimize the risk of a copyright violation, employees should provide references to the source(s) of information used and cite copyrighted works identified in online communications.
18. If employees choose to identify themselves as a Fire District employee on their personal social media accounts and even those that do not should be aware that he or she may be viewed as acting on behalf of the Fire District, as such no employee shall knowingly represent themselves as a spokesperson of the Fire District, post any comment, text, photo, audio, video or other multimedia file that negatively reflects upon the Fire District expresses views that are detrimental to the Fire Districts mission or undermine the public trust or is insulting or offensive to other individuals or to the public in regard to religion, sex, race or national origin. Fire District employees are encouraged to exercise extreme caution posting photographs of themselves in uniform or in situations where they can be readily identified as Fire District employees.
19. To the extent that employees use social media outside of their employment and in so doing employees identify themselves as Lakewood Fire District employees, or if they discuss matters related to the Lakewood Fire District on a social media site, employees must add a disclaimer on the front page, stating that it does not express the views of the Lakewood Fire District, and the employee is expressing only their personal views. For example: "The views expressed on this website/web log are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer." Place the disclaimer in a prominent position and repeat it for each posting that is expressing an opinion related to the Lakewood Fire District or Lakewood Fire District business. Employees must keep in mind that, if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of Lakewood Fire District policy and/or federal, state, or local laws, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary action.
20. Nothing in these policies is designed to interfere with, restrain or prevent employee communications regarding wages, hours or other terms and conditions of employment. Lakewood Fire District employees have the right to engage in or refrain from such activities.