

**U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY
DISTRICT 13**

EFFECTIVE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

DISTRICT COMMODORE INSTRUCTION I- 22032

SUBJECT: USCG AUXILIARY THIRTEENTH DISTRICT SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES v.3

1. **PURPOSE.** This instruction refines the criteria and process for utilizing Social Media within District 13, in accordance with and in addition to the U.S. Coast Guard Social Media Handbook v.2021, Coast Guard Auxiliary Public Affairs Manual 2014, Coast Guard External Affairs Manual 2021, and any pertinent signed memorandums.
2. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** DCOINST I-21032 v.2
3. **DISCUSSION.** Social media, which falls under the Public Affairs Directorate, has greatly enhanced our ability to tell the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Coast Guard story via text, imagery, graphics and video. It is used as an avenue to directly connect with the boating public and publicly disseminate valuable content in various mission areas. Social media is dynamic and allows two-way, synchronous communication and feedback with our stakeholders.

With benefits of utilizing front-facing social media, the Auxiliary also has a certain responsibility in understanding guidelines and ramifications. Official guidelines have not wholly kept up with the ever-changing technology and this instruction assists in addressing and maintaining professional use of the medium. Guidance evolves and is necessary as the use of social media increases within our units.

Keep in mind that posting on an official Coast Guard Auxiliary or Coast Guard social media page is akin to an abbreviated news or photo release. Subsequently, *all* social media content should fall within guidelines set forth in the [Auxiliary Public Affairs Manual](#), [Auxiliary Publication Officer's Guide](#), [Coast Guard External Affairs Manual v2021](#) in addition to the [Coast Guard Social Media Handbook v2021](#).

Facebook is statistically and currently the most utilized platform and the only one currently authorized at unit level.

4. ACTION

- a. All members of the District, when utilizing social media, will recognize and use such in accordance with this Instruction.
- b. The District will create an ADSO-PA Social Media (ADSO-PA SM) position to help with the management of social media within District 13. These positions cannot be held by the same member, so that there is never a problem if one of them is away.
- c. All social media pages will be approved by the DSO-PA and ADSO-PA SM prior to a page going public. Facebook is currently the only authorized platform below district level. To get a page approved,

send an email to the DSO-PA and ADSO-PA SM with member names of two trained administrators with full privileges. NOTE: Instagram and Twitter are currently only authorized at district level and above. Instagram is in a pilot program on the active-duty side and not yet approved at unit level. The Coast Guard Social Media handbook placed it at unit level in anticipation of Instagram being approved, which has yet to occur. The Digital Media Division at USCG HQ recently verified that Instagram is not yet approved at unit level (as of 31MAY22). If and when it gets approved, there will be more criteria to getting unit approval, included a completed social media plan submission prior to approval. This instruction should be updated if and when Instagram gets approved.

d. The DSO-PA and ADSO-PA SM will be added as full privilege administrators to every official social media account within D13, even pages already in use. They will act as silent administrators, who do not post content. This does not diminish the responsibility of respective units to administer and monitor their own pages. At least one elected unit leader will also be added to page with maximum permissions. This is for transition and staffing purposes.

e. The DSO-PA and ADSO-PA SM will maintain a current list of all social media pages within the district. The SO-PA will maintain a list of all social media pages within their Division and provide that list to the DSO-PA and ADSO-PA SM.

f. Any page created under the Coast Guard Auxiliary name is official and public. There are no unofficial pages. Do not create an unofficial page. Understand the difference between a *page* versus *group* before creating an Auxiliary page.

g. Auxiliary social media pages are not 'owned' by Auxiliary members even if they create the page and page content. Pages belong to the Auxiliary and should be relinquished if asked. Auxiliary pages should only remain in the possession of current Auxiliary members/units.

h. To administer an official Facebook page, you must log on using your personal account. Using generic or fake identities on Facebook, to create an account, is a violation of their Terms of Service. Having a Facebook account removed, due to this violation, could jeopardize the existence of an already established unit page.

i. Maintain brand identity across channels. Social media pages are an official representation of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary. Do not use nicknames or informal names. Begin the page name with U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary followed by your unit name. Never use the name U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary alone. That name is reserved for and assigned to main National social media pages. If using unit numbers, start with U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, add a location (as listed in Aux Directory), then unit number if desired. Unit number not required. If you already have a page with incorrect naming, do not make a new page! Page names can be changed within the settings menu.

j. Any Auxiliary member assigned as social media administrator or any other page role on an official Coast Guard Auxiliary or Coast Guard page should have already taken and passed the eLearning course AUX20 Introduction to Auxiliary Public Affairs. In addition, admins must read the [Coast Guard Social media Handbook 2021](#), [Auxiliary Public Affairs Manual](#) and any info pertaining to social media in the [Coast Guard External Affairs Manual 2021](#) or the [Auxiliary Manual](#) (paying attention to section R). An hour social media training (by phone or authorized class) is also required. The DSO-PA or ADSO-PA SM can offer that training.

k. There should be only one Facebook page per unit. A social media page is not required. Get leadership approval before creating a page for your unit, and before submitting it for approval at the

District level. Conduct a thorough search for old pages before creating a new one. If your unit already has a page or account in its name, make every effort to contact the old administrator to take over the page, have the page archived, or taken down prior to starting a new one. If no administrator can be found, attempt to claim the page via platform guidelines.

l. If your unit currently has an unauthorized Twitter or Instagram page, archive and delete page. Provide archive to DSO-PA.

m. If you affiliate as an Auxiliary member on social media, in any fashion including images, video, text, comments, you should act accordingly and respectfully. Anything posted should be considered public, and a reflection of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary values. Inflammatory discourse is discouraged. Refer to Auxiliary Manual Section R and any subsequent directives.

n. Do not "like" or follow commercial pages from an Auxiliary account, even non-profits unless they are Coast Guard or Auxiliary non-profits. Only "like" official Coast Guard, Auxiliary or other official U.S. government entities from an Auxiliary account.

o. Make sure there are no copyright or trademark infringements in your content. Just because it is posted on another page, does not mean it is clear to post on your page. Do not use non-government images or other intellectual property without expressed written permission. When in doubt, do not post it and check with DSO-PA.

p. Security and awareness with social media platforms and posts should take top priority. Secure your accounts, carefully follow OPSEC (Operations Security), SAPP (Security, Accuracy, Policy and Propriety), FOUO (For Official Use Only), and Privacy Act of 1974 restrictions.

Do not tag yourself or other members on an official Coast Guard Auxiliary social media post/page and do not share social media posts from personal timelines to an official page. Note: The aforementioned can possibly identify the military affiliation of a member to anyone on the internet and at the same time, directs the general public to that member's personal page. If there is open (public) information on the member's personal timeline, names/photos of family members and resident locations can be exposed, potentially violating the Privacy Act of 1974. The disclosure of personal information is subject to the provisions contained in the Privacy Act of 1974. The subject Act, with certain exceptions, prohibits the disclosure, distribution, dissemination or copying of any information containing home addresses, home telephone numbers, spouses' names, and social security numbers.

q. Do not post content with uniform infractions or any violation of PPE requirements.

r. Do not abandon pages. Keep them active. If a page is no longer active, consider assigning a new administrator, relinquish the account to the unit commander, or consider removing the page with unit leadership approval. If a decision has been made to delete the page, advise the DSO-PA. The DSO-PA or ASDO-PA SM will archive the page and either (1) permanently remove it, or (2) remove all other admins, deactivate the page, and maintain control of it in case a unit decides to reactive it at a later date. Choice of permanent removal versus deactivation will be up to the unit leadership. A unit page that does not have any posts for six months or more will be archived and removed. Unit and district leadership will be advised prior to removal. Unmonitored or abandoned social accounts can be the target of hackers, who can potentially post fraudulent messages under the Coast Guard Auxiliary name.

s. Social Media management shall be included in the unit leadership transition plan. Before creating a unit social media page, consider if you have the staff to manage it on daily basis. During transition,

decide if the current administrators will continue or the new unit public affairs officer will take over. During transition, make certain new administrators are added, including silent leadership administrators. Do not let a social media page get lost in the shuffle. It is extremely difficult to recover a page without an active member in control of it. Make sure page administrators are trained and qualified to manage a social media page. The DSO-PA or ASDO-PA SM, upon transition, shall add the new DSO-PA and ASDO-PA SM as admin to all D13 social media pages and will forward the file of archived pages to the new DSO-PA. Unit passwords and logins, if applicable, will also be provided.

t. Place the following disclaimer publicly on each account, usually in the 'about' section.

This page is for public information only and is not a distress communication channel. If you have an emergency and need Coast Guard assistance, use VHF-FM Channel 16 (156.8 MHz), dial 911, or call your nearest Coast Guard unit.

All comments are moderated. The Coast Guard Auxiliary retains the discretion to determine which comments it will post and which it will not. We expect all contributors to be respectful and will not post comments that contain personal attacks; that refer to Coast Guard or Auxiliary personnel by name; contain offensive terms that target specific ethnic or racial groups; or contain vulgar language. We will also not post comments that are spam, off topic, or that promote services or products.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary disclaims any liability for loss or damage resulting from any comments posted on this page. This forum may not be used for the submission of any claim, demand, informal or formal complaint, or other form of legal and/or administrative notice or process, or for the exhaustion of any legal and/or administrative remedy.

The U.S. Coast Guard will not collect or retain personally identifiable information unless you voluntarily provide it.

Any links provided to a U.S. Coast Guard presence on other third-party sites is for your reference only. The Coast Guard or Auxiliary does not endorse any non-government websites, companies or applications.

Editorial content on this site is for informational purposes only and not authority for action. Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Homeland Security, the Coast Guard, or the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

*Confidentiality Notice
Privacy Act of 1974*

The disclosure of personal information contained on this page is subject to the provisions contained in the Privacy Act of 1974. The subject Act with certain exceptions prohibits the disclosure, distribution, dissemination or copying of any material containing home addresses, home telephone numbers, spouses' names, and social security numbers, except for official business. Violation may result in disciplinary action by the Coast Guard and/or civilian criminal sanction.

On Twitter, there is no room allotted for the above statement. In the 'bio' section, you can write the following: *This is NOT an emergency communication channel. If you are in distress, use VHF Ch. 16 or dial 911. Per official policy, comments will be moderated.*

u. Unit page Administrators will create an archived file of page content on a regular basis and during staff transitions. Pages are considered federal records. Per the USCG Social Media manual, “In order to comply with federal regulations, USCG social media managers must be aware of precautions and steps needed to properly preserve applicable social media records and accounts. Examples of these actions include: conducting regular backups of current social media accounts, providing backup records to applicable USCG or DHS records management officials, and creating an archive of discontinued sites.”

5. REPORTS. The DSO-PA is tasked with reporting and coordinating changes through the EXCOM via the DCOS, when necessary. The DSO-PA and/or ADSO-PA SM will include social media information in their monthly Easy Report. When applicable, the SO-PA and FSO-PA will include social media information in their monthly Easy Report.

6. AUTHORIZED BY. District EXCOM

APPROVED BY:

Tiney D. Singler

Tiney D. Singler
District Commodore

Distribution: District Board
Flotilla Commanders Handbook
Unit Leadership
DDCs
DSO-PAs
ADSO-PAs
SO-PAs
FSO-PAs