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MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

NGMD-TAG

10 January 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Members of the Maryland Military Department (MDMILDEP), including the Maryland Army and Air National Guard, the Maryland Defense Force, and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency

SUBJECT: Policy for Social Media and Website Use

1. Social media provides a valuable tool for leaders and team members to stay in touch with families during activations, publicize training activities, announce job openings or new benefit programs, etc. Social media is a popular means of communication and is authorized for official use by MDMILDEP elements. As these communication technologies replace or augment traditional modes of communication, it is incumbent upon MDMILDEP leaders to familiarize themselves with these resources to ensure that our mission is not adversely affected as a result of their usage.
2. Operational security (OPSEC) is paramount. Information that may compromise OPSEC must not be disclosed in any public domain, including online, open source publications or the media. Do not disseminate or publish photographs displaying critical or sensitive information. Do not publicly reference, further disseminate, or republish critical or sensitive information that has already been compromised. Also be aware of information your fellow social media users post about you, including photos.
3. Participating in social media is a personal decision. Be cognizant of how you represent yourself within your personal social networks. Do not post information to social networking sites that would reflect poorly on the MDMILDEP. Information posted to personal profiles resides in the public domain, and usually becomes the intellectual property of the network owner. While members of the MDMILDEP retain their First Amendment rights even in an online environment, members of the National Guard and State employees who participate in social media are still expected to abide by applicable laws and regulations (including those governing political and commercial endorsements by military members) and to maintain a professional demeanor. Guard members must avoid offensive and inappropriate behavior that could bring discredit upon themselves and the National Guard. This includes posting any defamatory, libelous, obscene, abusive, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material. Guard members should also be sure to comply with MDNG Policy #15 NGMDAG SJA004) Policy Memorandum Rules and Regulations Governing Political Activities for the Maryland National Guard.

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4. Be transparent. Anyone making statements in a public forum should identify themselves and their affiliation with the MDMILDEP if they are commenting on department matters. If the individual is not an official authorized to speak on behalf of the department, they should make it clear that the statements are their own and do not represent an official MDMILDEP position. Such a disclaimer might read, "This statement is my own and does not constitute an endorsement by or opinion of the Maryland Military Department or US Department of Defense."

5. Only the MDMILDEP Public Affairs Office and other specifically designated organizations are permitted to create or maintain official organizational websites and social media sites. Subordinate organizations of the MDMILDEP are prohibited from establishing publicly accessible websites or groups independently of the Public Affairs Office. Individual members who establish online sites or groups relating to MDMILDEP must clearly state that the site or group is not official and may not use official government symbols such as unit insignia or patches, official seals and logos, etc., which are likely to be understood as implying government endorsement or participation. Members are strongly advised to notify the Public Affairs Office if they create such websites or social media pages so that they may be reviewed for compliance with this policy.

6. Team members with questions or concerns regarding the appropriate use of social media should contact the State Public Affairs Office at 410-576-6179.

LINDA L. SINGH
Major General, MDARNG
The Adjutant General