

VOLUME 6**COMMAND SOCIAL MEDIA****SUMMARY OF VOLUME 6 CHANGES**

Hyperlinks are denoted by ***bold, italic, blue and underlined font***.

The original publication date of this Marine Corps Order (right header) will not change unless/until a full revision of the MCO has been conducted.

The date denoted by **blue font** (left header) will reflect the date this Volume was last updated.

All Volume changes denoted in **blue font** will reset to black font upon a full revision of this Volume.

CANCELLATION:

VOLUME VERSION	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	ORIGINATION DATE	DATE OF CHANGES
ORIGINAL VOLUME	N/A	20 Sep 2024	N/A

Report Required:

Submit recommended changes to this Volume, via the proper channels, to:

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
Communication Directorate
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-3000

DISTRIBUTION: PCN 10255306400

**VOLUME 6: COMMAND SOCIAL MEDIA
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

REFERENCES.....	REF-1
CHAPTER 1: GENERAL OVERVIEW	1-1
0101 SCOPE	1-2
0102 GENERAL.....	1-2
010201 PURPOSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	1-2
010202 COMMUNICATION SYNCHRONIZATION	1-3
0103 APPLICABILITY	1-4
0104 AUTHORIZED USE	1-4
010401 GENERAL.....	1-4
010402 COMMANDS O6-LEVEL AND ABOVE.....	1-4
010403 COMMANDS O5-LEVEL AND BELOW	1-4
010404 UNIT LEADERS.....	1-4
010405 DEPLOYMENT READINESS COORDINATOR (DRC)/ UNIT READINESS COORDINATOR (URC).....	1-4
010405 RESERVE UNITS.....	1-5
0105 REQUIREMENTS.....	1-5
010501 RELEASE AUTHORITY.....	1-5
010502 SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGERS	1-5
010503 REGISTRATION	1-5
010504 OPENNESS	1-5
010505 PLATFORM GUIDANCE	1-5
010506 HACKED ACCOUNTS	1-5
010507 DEACTIVATION.....	1-6

CHAPTER 2: EFFECTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	2-1
0201 GENERAL	2-2
020101 COMMAND DECISION.....	2-2
020102 SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT	2-2
020103 BRAND STANDARDIZATION.....	2-2
020104 COMMAND WEBSITES.....	2-3
020105 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.....	2-3
020106 RESPONSIBLE ENGAGEMENT	2-3
0202 STANDARDS	2-3
020201 MODERATION.....	2-3
0203 RESPONSIBILITIES	2-4
020301 HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS, COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE (HQMC (CD)), DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION (DIRCOMM).....	2-4
020302 COMMANDERS EMPLOYING SOCIAL MEDIA.....	2-5

VOLUME 6: COMMAND SOCIAL MEDIA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

A	USMC SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK.....	A-1
B	ACRONYMS.....	B-1

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

References

MCO 5700.45-V6

20 Sep 2024

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Instruction 5400.17 CH 1, “Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes,”
January 24, 2023
- (b) DoD Instruction 5230.09 CH 1, “Clearance of DoD Information for Public Release,”
February 9, 2022
- (c) SECNAVINST 5870.9, “Use of Copyrighted Works in the Department of the Navy,”
June 14, 2019
- (d) DoD I 1300.18 CH 2, “DoD Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures,”
March 29, 2023
- (e) MCO 5210.11F

VOLUME 6: CHAPTER 1

“GENERAL OVERVIEW”

SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Hyperlinks are denoted by *[bold, italic, blue and underlined font](#)*.

The original publication date of this Marine Corps Order (MCO) Volume (right header) will not change unless/until a full revision of the MCO has been conducted.

All Volume changes denoted in *blue font* will reset to black font upon a full revision of this Volume.

CHAPTER VERSION	PAGE PARAGRAPH	SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES	DATE OF CHANGE

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL OVERVIEW

0101 SCOPE

This Volume prescribes strategic policy, procedures, and responsibilities for the establishment and use of United States Marine Corps (USMC) External Official Presence (EOP) like social media to support commanders' and the service's communication goals. The goal of this Volume is to ensure USMC's compliance with Department of Defense (DoD) policy governing official use of social media.

0102 GENERAL

This Volume prescribes basic guidance and responsibilities for commanders and staffs to manage command-level social media in accordance with references (a) – (d). It further designates official social media channels and policy requirements for the creation and dissemination of information via social media.

010201. Purpose of Social Media. Authorized and official communication with the public at local, regional, national, and international levels is critical to mission accomplishment. Optimized use of social media channels is critical to support commanders' and the service's communication goals.

A. Official USMC social media will be used to:

1. Communicate truthful, accurate and timely information to the full range of audiences; American, foreign, friendly, neutral, and adversary.
2. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between the USMC and key publics.
2. Support public communication objectives and the USMC Communication Strategy to maintain stakeholders' trust in the Marine Corps.
3. Increase positive public perception of the Marine Corps brand while advancing command and service-level communication goals.
4. Increase key stakeholder understanding of the Marine Corps' service in support of national strategic objectives and the national defense.

5. Directly engage with audiences critical to mission success.

B. Official USMC social media will never be used to:

1. Engage in activities that are illegal, inappropriate, or offensive to a reasonable person. Such activities include but are not limited to hate speech or material that ridicules others because of race, creed, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation; speech or material promoting violent extremist or terrorist activities; content intended to defame anyone or any organization; and political conversations.

2. Show any form of endorsement such as a share, follow, like, or other reaction to political statements, posts, graphics, or other types of content. These restrictions also apply to commercial and non-governmental organizations. Endorsement of products and services, to include non-profit organizations or causes, is not authorized. Informational posts about the Combined Federal Campaign and Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society are authorized. *(Posting a link to a news article relevant to the USMC is not considered endorsement.)*

3. Crowdfund or engage in commercial and/or retail activities. Selling or sharing links to retail providers of unit or USMC promotional items is prohibited.

4. Exclusively manage internal or command information campaigns. Private or closed social media groups, accounts, or feeds, no matter the author(s) or administrator(s), will not be considered official USMC communication.

5. Exclusively entertain or gain popularity and/or attention.

6. Conduct surveys or data collection of users. The only exception is Institutional Review Board-approved surveys.

010202. Communication Synchronization. To speak with a unified voice on institutional issues, all authorized and official social media activities will adhere to the published USMC Communication Strategy and associated plans that may govern public communication. Individual commanders establish their respective communication goals informed by the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, service-level guidance, and United States Government (USG) interagency communication goals, Geographic Combatant Command (GCC), sub-unified, and operational objectives as well as internal command communication imperatives. Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC), Communication Directorate (CD) establishes the service-level communication strategy

informed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), DoD, and USG interagency communication goals.

0103 APPLICABILITY

This Volume applies to all HQMC agencies to include the office of the CMC, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps (ACMC), and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC); all Deputy Commandants (DC), and all subordinate agencies or activities; all units within the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and supporting establishment (SE); individual Marine Corps unit commanders and senior enlisted; Training and Education Command (TECOM) and all associated formal school houses; and the Marine Corps University and formal Professional Military Education academies. This Volume does not apply to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC). Due to their unique mission, MCRC will develop social media policy and procedures that best meet the intent of Commanding General (CG), MCRC.

0104 AUTHORIZED USE

010401. General. Maintaining an official social media presence is not mandatory. Commands, organizations, installations, bases, or stations that have a 4502 Communication Strategy and Operations (COMMSTRAT) officer, a General Schedule (GS)-10XX-series civilian director, or a senior 4502 serving as the command COMMSTRAT officer are authorized to establish and maintain an official social media presence, but it is not required.

010402. Commands O6-Level and Above. Commands O6-level and above, which do not have a 4502 COMMSTRAT officer or GS-10XX-series civilian director on staff but do have an established Unit Information Officer (UIO) program, are also authorized to maintain an official social media presence.

010403. Commands O5-Level and Below. Although commands O5-level and below are authorized to have a UIO program, they are not authorized to have an official, public-facing social media presence.

010404. Unit Leaders. CGs and Sergeants Major (SgtMaj) of major subordinate commands (MSC) and above are authorized, but not required, to have official social media presences attached to their billet, (e.g., if desired, the CG and SgtMaj of 2d Marine Logistics Group could make social media accounts directly associated and named after their official billets). Leadership social media is considered official communication and must follow the standards requirements of official accounts, meet command communication objectives, and be registered.

010405. Deployment Readiness Coordinator (DRC)/Unit Readiness Coordinator (URC). Social media is not an authorized tool for DRCs and/or URCs to disseminate official communication. DRCs/URCs who wish to use authorized command social media channels to disseminate authorized information will coordinate with the command release authority. DRCs/URCs will use the Authorized Organizational Communication Tool (AOCT), email,

newsletters, or telephone as primary communication tools for their audience. DRCs/URCs will not disseminate unofficial information.

010406. Reserve Units. Marine Corps Reserve units with an O5 commander and an appointed and trained UIO are authorized to use social media due to the vast differences in regional audiences and immediate impact reserve units have on their communities.

0105 REQUIREMENTS

010501. Release Authority. The release authority is directly responsible for all official communication, which includes social media. The command release authority for all official communication is the commander; however, release authority may be delegated in writing to the command's senior 4502 COMMSTRAT officer or GS-10XX-series civilian director. Only the release authority may authorize content for social media posting. Refer to Volume 1 of this Order for additional information on release authority.

010502. Social Media Managers. Due to social media's ability to globally communicate, in near real-time, the senior 4502 COMMSTRAT officer or GS-10XX-series civilian director will ensure social media managers have the maturity, skills, and situational awareness to communicate on behalf of the command with the understanding the overall responsibility for all official communication is the command release authority. No contractors shall perform this function.

010503. Registration. Commands authorized to have a social media presence, and that choose to, must register all command social media channels on the USMC social media directory at <https://www.marines.mil/Site-Registration/>, the DoD Unified Registration System at <https://www.defense.gov/Resources/Register-a-Site/>, and with the United States (U.S.) Digital Registry at <https://digital.gov/services/u-s-digital-registry/>.

010504. Openness. Authorized command social media channels must be open to the public and are for official USMC communication only. Social media channels will be attributable to the USMC and will not mislead users of the site as to the originator of content.

010505. Platform Guidance. Command social media will strictly follow each social media platform's terms of service and the guidelines established in this Order. Command social media will also ensure Section 508 compliance. Social media accounts will obtain verification through the platform before claiming to be an official USMC social media page. Contact HQMC (CD) for assistance in obtaining verification. Once verified, official social media accounts will state in the description or "about" section: "Official U.S. Marine Corps account of [full unit name]."

010506. Hacked Accounts. Any official social media account suspected of being hacked will immediately be reported to HQMC (CD) to initiate coordination with the platform for assistance. Imposter social media accounts can also be reported via the following link: https://usmc.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/DCI_IC4_CY/SitePages/SNS.aspx.

010507. Deactivation. All public-facing command social media accounts without an assigned 4502 COMMSTRAT officer, GS-10XX series civilian director, or authorized UIO, or otherwise failing to meet requirements in paragraph 0104 of this Volume, will be deactivated and archived within 30 days in accordance with reference (a) upon publishing of this Order.

VOLUME 6: CHAPTER 2

“EFFECTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA”

SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Hyperlinks are denoted by *bold, italic, blue and underlined font*.

The original publication date of this Marine Corps Order (MCO) Volume (right header) will not change unless/until a full revision of the MCO has been conducted.

All Volume changes denoted in *blue font* will reset to black font upon a full revision of this Volume.

CHAPTER VERSION	PAGE PARAGRAPH	SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES	DATE OF CHANGE

CHAPTER 2

EFFECTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

0201 GENERAL

Command social media is an EOP and provides a credible, official source of information for the full range of audiences. Content posted on command social media channels formally represents the command, and by extension, the commander. Command social media will always support commanders' communication goals while supporting the USMC communication strategy to inform and educate audiences and foster connections with them. Social media will be employed to both push information to followers, but also to receive and respond to input from those followers in a public forum to address issues, build awareness and understanding, and further the communication objectives of the command.

020101. Command Decision. Communication is commanders' business and commanders are responsible for communicating to Marines and their families. However, social media is not a panacea for all communication needs. Not every command requires a social media presence. A social media site should not be used ineffectively nor abandoned. Before launching a social media presence, commanders will consider the below at minimum:

- What is to be accomplished?
- What are the communication objectives and how do they move the command closer to achieving its mission?
- Is the level of transparency required in social media appropriate for the command and its mission?
- Who is the audience and what platform best achieves this?
- Does the command have the content and personnel — both now and long-term — to sustain informing the audience via a social media platform?

020102. Social Media Content. All social media posts will be synchronized to the maximum extent possible. HQMC (CD), USMC Component Commands, Marine Corps Installation Commands, and Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) COMMSTRAT offices will coordinate and synchronize social media to optimize creative content and reduce inefficiencies across the FMF and SE. All content will follow guidance found within references (b) and (c).

020103. Brand Standardization. To increase brand awareness, commands will standardize social media content by aligning with the USMC Brand Guide. Official social media accounts will choose from the branded graphics provided by HQMC (CD) for the banner spaces on all applicable social media platforms. The branded graphics can be accessed by contacting HQMC (CD), Production and Engagement Section. Unit insignia will be used as the profile picture for official command social media accounts. It is crucial the Marine Corps maintains consistent messaging and our brand integrity across the service. All content formally recognizing directed observances and/or awareness events by the Marine Corps will be produced by HQMC (CD), approved by HQMC (CD) DIRCOMM, and released via the HQMC (CD)

Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS) page, flagship social media platforms and Marines.mil. While individual commands/units are encouraged to share this content via their own platforms, they will not create their own organic content for any cultural observance or awareness event. Any proposed deviation from this approach will require HQMC (CD) approval.

020104. Command Websites. Command websites and command social media are mutually supporting; however, websites are the primary source of digital engagement efforts. Commands will use command websites to post long-term, enduring content to increase public awareness and support for their unit, the Marine Corps, and operational objectives. Posting to social media with links to the official website enables publics to learn more about a given topic/event while providing them the ability to engage with the command via social media.

020105. Internal Communication. The intent of an official social media presence is to publicly communicate; therefore, commanders will use other methods and communication channels for information specific to internal audiences. Examples of effective, appropriate internal communication mediums are face-to-face communication (meetings, formations, liberty briefs, etc.), secure email, Unit, Personal, and Family Readiness Program (UPFRP) communication via the Organizational Communication System (OCS), and other internal software tools, (e.g., Microsoft Teams). In the event of a crisis regarding health and public safety, all means of communication, both internal and external, may be used at the commander's discretion. Commanders, whether they have an assigned COMMSTRAT capability or not, will not use private or closed social media groups to disseminate command information or any information that can be misinterpreted as command information.

020106. Responsible Engagement. Although the social media model is designed to reward users who produce engaging content by extending its reach, it is the commander's responsibility to ensure USMC resources are being used for social media engagement that meets well-defined, appropriate objectives. Social media content can, and should, be creative and engaging; however, it will not be created only to entertain or to gain popularity and/or attention, (i.e., "go viral").

0202 STANDARDS

Marine Corps social media sites are official representations of the Department of the Navy (DON) and must always demonstrate professionalism. All commands operating official social media will comply with the guidance below.

020201. Moderation

A. The Marine Corps may not block individual social media accounts from official Marine Corps social media sites; however, the Marine Corps may delete comments that constitute a violation of law, regulation, or the Marine Corps' Terms of Use. The Marine Corps may also delete comments from businesses attempting to sell merchandise/services in the comment section of official posts, as that could be improperly perceived as implied endorsement

of businesses by the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps may also refer offensive comments to the Social Media Service Provider to consider enforcement of their own terms of service.

B. The First Amendment does not permit a public official who uses a social media account for official duties to block individuals from an otherwise open online dialogue simply because they hold differing views.

C. Comments shall never be turned off at any time. If the government uses a platform that permits public comment, it creates a public forum which is bound by traditional First Amendment principles.

0203 RESPONSIBILITIES

020301. Headquarters Marine Corps, Communication Directorate (HQMC (CD)), Director of Communication (DIRCOMM)

A. Serve as the lead Subject Matter Expert (SME) to the CMC for service-level and command social media. Manage “Commandant of the Marine Corps,” “Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps,” “Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps,” and/or flagship social media accounts, if applicable.

B. Serve as the USMC’s main representative and liaison for official USMC accounts on social media platforms.

C. Author and manage USMC command social media and official public communication policy.

D. In coordination with TECOM, provide social media education and training for the Marine Corps Total Force.

E. Provide final approval for all social media channels established and/or requested by authorized USMC commands/units.

F. Support the FMF and SE for network exemptions.

G. Coordinate and synchronize official communication via social media across the service by developing and distributing service-level communication plans.

H. Conduct a quarterly review of the social media manager roster.

I. Employ an archiving plan in accordance with reference (e).

020202. Commanders Employing Social Media

A. Lead and manage all command social media activity in accordance with references (a) – (e).

B. Ensure a direct line of communication between the assigned 4502 COMMSTRAT officer or GS-10XX civilian director with the commander and HQMC (CD), or between the UIO, the commander, and the Higher Headquarters (HHQ) COMMSTRAT office, to coordinate and synchronize official communication via social media across the service. Submit roster updates to social media manager list as required, and at least once per quarter.

C. Label all authorized social media channels as official USMC communication and classify each as a USG organization.

D. Ensure all authorized social media content is properly reviewed and released in accordance with reference (b). Release of information on command social media sites is considered officially released through the command's release authority. The Marine Corps is nonpartisan and focused on mission accomplishment – command social media managers are prohibited from engaging with audiences on posts or comments designed to incite controversy or go viral. The authority to manage and release information must be renewed during command and personnel changes. Attribution shall not be included on social media posts or comments unless:

1. The post is intended as a press release and the attribution is included to facilitate further conversation between a spokesperson and members of the media; or

2. There is a public health, security, or safety issue, and the command social media manager is providing amplifying information in direct response to questions received from affected families and personnel.

E. Ensure inactive accounts related to the command are closed. An “inactive” account is defined as one without content or action within 60 days. Coordinate with appropriate social media platforms and HQMC (CD) to close inactive accounts related to the command.

F. Ensure imposter accounts related to the command are reported and status of imposter accounts maintained until closed. Social media impostors are fake accounts masquerading as U.S. Marines, their families, or other DoD personnel. Coordinate with appropriate social media platforms and HQMC (CD) to close imposter accounts related to the command.

G. Ensure all authorized social media channels have clear community guidelines that include:

1. Privacy and security disclaimers.

2. Copyright and trademark disclaimers.
 3. Moderated-account disclaimer.
 4. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) notice.
 5. Contact information must be a valid organizational .mil or .gov email address. Personal and non-government email addresses are not permitted.
- H. Ensure “sharing” of commercial news articles and content on official accounts does not endorse the commercial news organization (soliciting the audience to follow, like, or subscribe is considered an endorsement). Shared posts must represent credible information. Commands must avoid the appearance of preferring some news networks over others. Commands will use an “all or none” approach when liking, following, and/or sharing content from regional and local news organizations.
- I. Ensure livestreamed events have a contingency plan to take them offline in the event of violence, crime, or imagery inconsistent with the Marine Corps’ brand.
- J. Do not use appropriated funds to boost content, advertise, or pay for engagement or followers.
- K. Establish official social media accounts in compliance with local network restrictions.
- L. Ensure Marines supporting social media activities have the proper equipment and network access to communicate via social media, (e.g., network restriction exemptions, Commercial Internet Service Protocol (C-ISP) “whiteline” access) via the HQMC (CD) Operations Section.
- M. Ensure UIOs using social media are authorized and are adhering to the contents of this Order.
- N. Ensure all social media accounts are registered. Registrations with all systems must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.
- O. Maintain social media standard operating procedures (SOP), which contain, at a minimum:
1. An outline for frequency and consistency of content.
 2. A process for approval of content.
 3. Reiterates use of the USMC Brand Guide, available from HQMC (CD).

4. Procedures for ensuring the security of command social media usernames and passwords, to include the removal of authorized users upon departure from COMMSTRAT billet or command.

5. A roster of all authorized social media channels for the command.

6. A communication plan in the event of crisis and/or emergency communication, (e.g., death of a service member, severe weather, etc.). Use of social media must be integrated into COMMSTRAT planning as part of crisis communication efforts. Release of casualty information must be in accordance with reference (d).

<div><div>VOLUME 6: APPENDIX A</div><div>“USMC SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK”</div><div>SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES</div><div>Hyperlinks are denoted by <i><u>bold, italic, blue and underlined font</u></i>.</div><div>The original publication date of this Marine Corps Order (MCO) Volume (right header) will not change unless/until a full revision of the MCO has been conducted.</div><div>All Volume changes denoted in blue font will reset to black font upon a full revision of this Volume.</div></div>			
CHAPTER VERSION	PAGE PARAGRAPH	SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES	DATE OF CHANGE

APPENDIX A

U.S. MARINE CORPS SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK

The U.S. Marine Corps Social Media Handbook is available at:
<https://www.marines.mil/News/Social-Media/>

<p>VOLUME 6: APPENDIX B</p> <p>“ACRONYMS”</p> <p>SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES</p> <p>Hyperlinks are denoted by <i><u>bold, italic, blue and underlined font.</u></i></p> <p>The original publication date of this Marine Corps Order (MCO) Volume (right header) will not change unless/until a full revision of the MCO has been conducted.</p> <p>All Volume changes denoted in blue font will reset to black font upon a full revision of this Volume.</p>			
CHAPTER VERSION	PAGE PARAGRAPH	SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES	DATE OF CHANGE

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS**Volume 6, Appendix B****MCO 5700.45 – V6**

20 Sep 2024

APPENDIX B**ACRONYMS**

ACMC	Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps
AOCT	Authorized Organizational Communication Tool
CG	Commanding General
C-ISP	Commercial Internet Service Protocol
CMC	Commandant of the Marine Corps
COMMSTRAT	Communication Strategy and Operations
DC	Deputy Commandant
DoD	Department of Defense
DON	Department of the Navy
DRC	Deployment Readiness Coordinator
DVIDS	Defense Visual Information Distribution Service
EOP	External Official Presence
FMF	Fleet Marine Force
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GS	General Schedule
HHQ	Higher Headquarters
HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
HQMC (CD)	Communication Directorate
MCRC	Marine Corps Recruiting Command
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MSC	Major Subordinate Command
OCS	Organizational Communication System
SE	Supporting Establishment
SgtMaj	Sergeants Major
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SMMC	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TECOM	Training and Education Command
U.S.	United States
UIO	Unit Information Officer
UPFRP	Unit, Personal, and Family Readiness Program
URC	Unit Readiness Coordinator
USG	United States Government
USMC	United States Marine Corps