

# DHS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER THIRD-PARTY DIGITAL SERVICES

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## I. Purpose

- A. This Directive establishes Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy regarding the use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes.
- B. It provides instruction regarding:
1. Approving Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for official use by the Department;
  2. Establishing official accounts under these services;
  3. Using the services as a means of communication with the public; and
  4. Retiring accounts and services that are no longer being used by the Department.

## II. Scope

- A. This Directive applies throughout DHS.
- B. The scope of this Directive is limited to the use and management of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services where the intent is to make DHS-related or other government information available to the public or to a general audience within DHS, or non-operational situational awareness related to DHS missions and activities. It does not pertain to the operational use of Social Media or other Third-Party Digital Services. Finally, this Directive provides guidance regarding online engagement using these services in a personal capacity where such personal engagement relates to DHS activities or as otherwise outlined in the Instruction.
- C. This Directive applies to DHS employees, contractors and non-DHS entities that are supporting DHS mission-related activities or accessing Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services via DHS information systems

technologies, including internet connections, computers, and mobile communication devices, or in support of DHS-related activities.

### III. Authorities

- A. Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 552a, “Records Maintained on Individuals” [The Privacy Act of 1974, as amended]
- B. Title 5, U.S.C., Sections 7321-7326, “Hatch Act”, Part 734, “Political Activities of Federal Employees”
- C. Title 6, U.S.C., Section 142, “Chief Privacy Officer”
- D. Title 29, U.S.C., Section 794d, “Electronic and Information Technology” [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973]
- E. Title 44, U.S.C., Chapter 21, “National Archives and Records Administration,” Chapter 29, “Records Management by the Archivist of the United States and by the Administrator of General Services,” Chapter 31, “Records Management by Federal Agencies,” Chapter 33, “Disposal of Records,” Chapter 35, “Coordination of Federal Information Policy,” and Chapter 36, “Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services”
- F. OMB Memorandum M-10-06, Open Government Directive
- G. OMB Memorandum M-10-22, Guidance for Online Use of Web Measurement and Customization Technologies
- H. OMB Memorandum M-10-23, Guidance for Agency Use of Third-Party Websites and Applications
- I. OMB Memorandum M-13-10, Antideficiency Act Implications of Certain Online Terms of Service Agreements
- J. OMB Guidance, Social Media, Web-Based Interactive Technologies, and the Paperwork Reduction Act (April 7, 2010)
- K. DHS Delegation 2001, “Delegation to the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs”

### IV. Responsibilities

- A. The **DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs:**
  - 1. Authorizes and serves as the oversight authority for all DHS use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services per the scope of this Directive;

2. Approves the use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes by the Department, including use by components, and all official DHS accounts established under approved services;
3. Provides procedural guidance and training for establishing, maintaining, and publishing content to official accounts on approved Third-Party Digital Services;
4. Approves (or delegates the approval of) all content published to official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts, consulting with relevant internal organizations (including the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Chief Privacy Officer, Chief Freedom of Information Officer, Chief Information Officer, and General Counsel) to ensure compliance with applicable laws, policies and procedures; and
5. Enforces the policies outlined in and manages the execution of this Directive.

B. The **DHS Chief Information Officer (CIO):**

1. Ensures adherence to information systems policies, laws, regulations, and guidance including those regarding accessibility and security;
2. Ensures access to approved Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services across DHS information systems, in accordance with laws, regulations, policies and guidance regarding information technology (IT) and network security;
3. Recommends account security/password policy requirements for all Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts; and
4. Establishes the records retention and disposition schedules relating to the use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes, as administered by the DHS Chief Records Officer.

C. The **DHS Chief Privacy Officer and Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer:**

1. Serves as the authority on privacy matters relating to the DHS use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes;
2. Approves any use, release, or disclosure of personally identifiable information (PII) through official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts;

3. Assesses and mitigates privacy risks associated with the Department's use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes;
4. Oversees the processing of Freedom of Information Act requests for records related to official DHS use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services; and
5. Establishes and ensures adherence to privacy policies, laws, regulations, and guidance.

D. **DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

1. Serves as the authority on civil rights and civil liberty matters related to the Department's use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes;
2. Assesses and mitigates risks to civil rights and civil liberties associated with the Department's use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes; and
3. Ensures the Department's use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes is in compliance with all constitutional, statutory, regulatory, policy, and other requirements relating to the civil rights and civil liberties of all affected individuals.

E. **DHS Component Public (External) Affairs Directors:**

1. Establish a formal process for publishing information to Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes that aligns with procedural guidance from the DHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs;
2. Follow procedural guidance established by the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs in approving content published to official component Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts; and
3. Respond to certification and reporting requirements for component Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services.

## V. Policy and Requirements

A. **Policy:**

1. The use of approved Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services is an effective and efficient way to communicate the Department's mission and activities to the public and allows for key stakeholders to engage with DHS.

2. Official use of Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes follows all applicable laws, regulations, and policies including those regarding accessibility, civil rights and civil liberties protections, Freedom of Information Act provisions, information quality, intellectual property, privacy, records management, and security.

B. **Requirements:**

1. DHS components and offices may only use approved Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Services for public communication purposes.

2. Permission to use an approved Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service for public communication purposes in an official capacity is granted by the DHS Office of Public Affairs.

3. Official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts for public communication purposes are established only for official, mission-related purposes as provided for in the Instruction to this Directive.

4. Access to approved Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service platforms is provided based on the mission requirement/business need. This includes the management of an official DHS Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service account for public communication purposes or monitoring a non-DHS Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service account for non-operational situational awareness, unrelated to operational use as defined in the Instruction.

5. Official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts used for public communication are required to have a current and active primary point of contact (account manager) who is responsible for managing account security and overseeing activity on the account.

6. A list of official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts used for public communication is maintained by the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs.

7. Any content for public communication purposes posted to an official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service account is considered public content, regardless of any privacy controls inherent to the platform that are meant to restrict access to that content.

8. Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service Accounts created or used for official Department business stay under the control of the Department, and official DHS accounts remain distinctly separate from personal accounts unless personal accounts are required by the platform to log in to/access the official DHS account.

9. Content published to official Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service accounts for public communication purposes is approved following procedural guidance established by the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs before publication and distribution.

10. Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service Accounts are used as part of a larger, integration communications strategy and should not be the sole outlet for disseminating information related to official DHS functions and activities.

11. Social Media and other Third-Party Digital Service Accounts that are no longer in use by the Department will be deactivated and archived per Office of Public Affairs and U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requirements.

12. All requests for exceptions to this Directive are submitted in writing to DHS Office of Public Affairs and are handled on a case-by-case basis.

## VI. Questions

Address any questions or concerns regarding this Directive to the DHS Office of Public Affairs.

**RANDOLPH D  
ALLES**

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R.D. Alles  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the  
Under Secretary for Management

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Date