

ALCOAST 458/08 [24 September 2008]

R 241735Z SEP 08 ZUI ASN-A00268000011 ZYB FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-092// TO ALCOAST BT UNCLAS //N05700// ALCOAST 458/08 COMDTNOTE 5700
SUBJ: SOCIAL MEDIA - OFFICIAL INTERNET POSTS A. COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC 221746Z SEP 08/ALCOAST 457/08 B. PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANUAL, COMDTINST M5728.2 (SERIES) C. THE COAST GUARD FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOIA) AND PRIVACY ACTS MANUAL, COMDTINST M5260.3 (SERIES) D. THE COAST GUARD ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK, COMDTINST 5730.2 (SERIES)

1. THIS ALCOAST PROVIDES INTERIM DIRECTION ON OFFICIAL COAST GUARD INTERNET POSTS ON WEB LOGS, KNOWN AS BLOGS, FORUMS, SOCIAL MEDIA SITES, AND OTHER WEB SITES. SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENTS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO INFORM AND COLLABORATE WITH THE PUBLIC IN MANY WAYS. RECENTLY WE HAVE SEEN THIS THROUGH EXTENSIVE BLOG DISCUSSION OF THE SERVICES EXPANDING ROLE IN THE ARCTIC, BY ENGAGING IN NEW FORUMS SUCH AS THE DOD BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE, AND THROUGH INCREASING AFFINITY GROUPS IN NETWORKING TOOLS SUCH AS FACEBOOK. POSTS ALSO PROVIDE LEADING EDGE INDICATORS OF COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES AND NEEDS. OUR APPROACH TO ONLINE CONTENT IS VERY SIMILAR TO OUR EXISTING PUBLIC AFFAIRS

POLICY: TO BE AWARE OF POSTS RELEVANT TO THE SERVICES MISSIONS, POLICIES, AND PEOPLE AND TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AT THE RIGHT LEVEL AND THE RIGHT TIME TO ENSURE INFORMED DISCUSSIONS TO THE EXTENT THAT OUR RESOURCES ALLOW.

2. IAW REF A, AREAS, DISTRICTS, SECTORS, AND SUBORDINATE UNITS ARE AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND RESPOND TO INTERNET DISCUSSION ON MATTERS THAT ARE IN THEIR LANE AS OUTLINED IN REF B TO ENSURE THE VIRTUAL PUBLIC RECORD HAS ACCURATE AND PROPERLY CHARACTERIZED INFORMATION. UNITS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO PROACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO ONLINE CONTENT TO FURTHER PUBLIC INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND UNDERSTANDING OF COAST GUARD ROLES, MISSIONS, AND ISSUES. AREA AND DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFFS WILL FACILITATE AND SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS. UNIT COLLATERAL DUTY PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS MAY ALSO ENGAGE IN THIS REALM AS RESOURCES ALLOW. COMDT (CG-0922) WILL PROVIDE OR COORDINATE THE SAME FACILITATION AND SUPPORT FOR COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS UNITS.

3. THE GUIDELINES FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION OUTLINED IN REF B APPLY EQUALLY TO ALL MODES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, INCLUDING OFFICIAL POSTS TO INTERNET SITES. FURTHERMORE, THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTING INFORMATION OUTLINED IN REF C MUST ALSO BE FOLLOWED WHERE THEY APPLY. CONSISTENT WITH OUR DUTY TO PREVENT DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION AS PROHIBITED BY POLICY OR LAW, THE GOAL IS MAXIMUM DISCLOSURE WITH MINIMUM DELAY OF AVAILABLE, FACTUAL, AND PERTINENT INFORMATION.

4. THE FORMAT FOR RESPONSES IS INFORMAL, PLAIN LANGUAGE AS OUTLINED IN REF B AND MAY REFLECT A FIRST PERSON TONE IF DEEMED APPROPRIATE.

THESE RESPONSES SHOULD FOCUS ON FACTUAL INFORMATION AND NOT INCLUDE DEFENSIVE OR ARGUMENTATIVE WORDING. OFFICIAL RESPONSES SHOULD INCLUDE THE RANK, NAME, TITLE, AND UNIT OF THE PERSON MAKING THE POST.

5. A DISCLAIMER TO ENSURE COAST GUARD ENDORSEMENT OF THE WEB SITE IS NOT IMPLIED WILL BE USED IN ALL CASES WHEN POSTING CONTENT ON NON-COAST GUARD SITES. THE DISCLAIMER TO USE IS AS FOLLOWS: "THIS IS AN OFFICIAL UNITED STATES COAST GUARD POSTING FOR THE PUBLICS INFORMATION. OUR POSTING DOES NOT ENDORSE THIS SITE OR ANYTHING ON IT, INCLUDING LINKS TO OTHER SITES,

AND WE DISCLAIM RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY FOR THE SITE AND ITS CONTENT."

6. COMDT (CG-092S), RECENTLY RENAMED THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA STAFF, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY, GUIDANCE, AND TOOLS NEEDED TO PERFORM THIS TASK. COMDT (CG-0922) IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SYNCHRONIZING ENGAGEMENT WITH ALL MEDIA- BASED CONTENT ON THE COAST GUARD. THE FOLLOWING BASIC ACTIONS WILL BE USED TO COORDINATE COAST GUARD POSTS ON INTERNET SITES:

A. COMDT (CG-092) WILL GATHER COAST GUARD RELATED POSTS FROM THE INTERNET ON A CONTINUAL BASIS AND SHARE WITH FIELD PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICES AND HEADQUARTERS DIRECTORATES/UNITS. AREA AND DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFFS MAY ALSO FORWARD ITEMS TO COMDT (CG-092). SPECIFIC DETAILS WILL BE PROVIDED SEPARATELY TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFFS BY COMDT (CG-092S).

B. THE POSTS WILL BE REVIEWED FOR ITEMS THAT MIGHT REQUIRE FURTHER ACTION. COMDT (CG-0922) WILL FOLLOW UP MATTERS THAT INVOLVE COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS UNITS. AREA AND DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFFS WILL FOLLOW UP MATTERS IN THEIR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY AND UNDER THEIR OPERATIONAL CHAIN OF COMMAND.

C. POSTS BENEFITING FROM OR REQUIRING FOLLOW-UP WILL BE ACTED UPON QUICKLY USING THE POLICY GUIDELINES OUTLINED IN REFS B AND C. IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS MAY REQUIRE THE ISSUANCE OF VERY BASIC FACTUAL INFORMATION THAT IS AVAILABLE OR A SHORT STATEMENT EXPLAINING AN INABILITY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION DUE TO PRIVACY, SENSITIVITY, OR INVESTIGATORY CONCERNS, AND WHERE ABLE, FOLLOWING UP AT A LATER DATE WITH MORE INFORMATION.

D. A HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM WILL BE CONVENED AT THE REQUEST OF COMDT (CG-092) TO ADDRESS SIGNIFICANT ISSUES REQUIRING CROSS-PROGRAMMATIC INPUT. AREAS AND DISTRICTS SHOULD HAVE A SIMILAR PROCESS IN PLACE TO ENSURE ACCURACY OF OFFICIAL COAST GUARD CONTENT POSTED ON WEB SITES. THE COMMUNICATION ACTION PLAN PROCESS CONTAINED IN REF D MAY BE USED AS NEEDED IN THESE SITUATIONS.

7. COMDT (CG-092S) AND COMDT (CG-0922) ARE AUTHORIZED TO ISSUE SUBJECT AND PROCESS SPECIFIC GUIDANCE VIA LESS FORMAL MEANS AS NEEDED.

8. THIS INTERIM DIRECTION WILL BE UPDATED AS NEEDED AND FORMALIZED IN CHANGE 1 TO REF B.

9. COMDT (CG-092S) POC IS CDR GLYNN SMITH AT (202) 372-4602 OR GLYNN.C.SMITH(AT)USCG.MIL.

10. COMDT (CG-0922) POC IS CDR RON LABREC AT (202) 372-4627 OR RONALD.A.LABREC(AT)USCG.MIL.

11. RELEASED BY RDML MARY E. LANDRY, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENTAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

12. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

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