



UC DAVIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Social Media Style Guide

UCDFD Social Media Style Guide

Style Guide Purpose

This document provides the necessary guidelines to establish uniformity on all of our social media platforms. This style guide is the go-to resource for how our brand appears and acts. It allows the UC Davis Fire Department (UCDFD) to create a cohesive experience across every profile. This guide includes brand colors, voice, visual guidelines and everything else that distinguishes our brand. Also included are guidelines for content as it relates to profile curation and postings, best practices and uses for hashtags.

Active Accounts

- Facebook.com/ucdfd
- Twitter.com/ucdavisfire
- Instagram.com/ucdavisfire
- Snapchat.com/add/ucdavisfire
- Youtube.com/ucdavisfire

Common Use of Social Media Platforms

UCDFD most commonly uses Facebook to tell our story. It's to share interactive photos, note yearly milestones and heavily promote campaigns and organization initiatives.

UCDFD most commonly uses Twitter for sharing of news and to engage in/create conversations. It's a place to share photographs and graphics as they pertain to educating/informing our audience. This social platform lets us quickly and easily interact with our followers about emerging topics and ideas.

UCDFD most commonly uses Instagram as our creative social platform. We use it to drive concepts, campaigns and initiatives in the most visual way possible.

UCDFD most commonly uses Snapchat to communicate and initiate direct person-to-person interaction as well as telling a point-of-view video or picture captured story of the organization's lifestyle.

Best Practices

Structure vs. Abstract

Social media is both structured and abstract – it's new media marketing's biggest juxtaposition. When it comes to social media, it's important to keep in mind a best practice structure, however, it's also important to let creativity flow.

Quality vs. Quantity

It's important to always remember social media is quality verses quantity. It's better to have one solid post – in terms of concept, content and direct messaging as it pertains to UCDFD – than to have five posts a week that don't clearly communicate anything.

Follow the Leader

Not sure where to pull relevant content? Concerned that you aren't developing and utilizing hashtags properly? Pay attention to UC Davis' primary social media accounts. In our case, it's @ucdavis on Twitter

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and Instagram along with facebook.com/ucdavis. Take note of what those primary accounts are doing in terms of: brand voice, concept themes, mission statement alignment, hashtags, interaction, tagging, highlights and best posting times. Make sure to take note of UC Davis Strategic Communications comments, retweets and shares across all active platforms, and follow suit.

Our Brand Voice

Who we are: Professional. Proud. Engaged. We value the connection we have to those we serve and revel in belonging to a diverse community of passionate Aggies. We believe working for UCDFD is more than a job, we want to share passion we have for our profession and provides insights of who we are as individuals and collectively as a team. We our innovative and continually seek opportunities to better protect and care for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Our tone: We are energetic, enthusiastic, and informative. We believe in what we do and believe in the positive impacts we make in people's lives every day. We love to converse, answer questions, and enjoy asking questions that help us learn how we can better serve. We're optimistic but realistic. We tell the truth.

Positivity and Transparency

We present our messages with a positive attitude but are honest and transparent in the information we share.

Ownership of Posts

Messages on all UCDFD platforms are posted in the character voice described above. We DO NOT attach names or initials to posts.

General Style Guidelines

Other Accounts/Sources

We always do our best to reference another account (when appropriate or available) in any message we share. When possible, we reference the account mid-message as opposed to the end.

Not Great: TOUCHDOWN! UC Davis Firefighters support Aggie Football by rooting for them on game day and caring for them on the field: bit.ly/1v3P1Ek #aggiepride @UCDfootball.

Better: TOUCHDOWN! UC Davis Firefighters support @UCDfootball by rooting for them on game day and caring for them on the field: bit.ly/1v3P1Ek #aggiepride

Dates and Times

For times, use am and pm (lowercase, no periods). *3 pm, 10 am.*

Use "to" between times (*2 pm to 4 pm*) unless space is needed. Then use a dash. (*2-4 pm*).

Write out full words for days of the week (Monday, Tuesday) and use dates (5/19) to save space or reference dates in advance. Months can also be abbreviated (Jan., Feb.) for space.

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Notes on Punctuation

Use a colon and a space before a link.

Shocking! 5 things you never knew about using a defibrillator to save a life: <http://bit.ly/1uT1avy>

An exclamation point or question mark (followed by a single space) can also introduce a link:

What they didn't tell you when you dreamt of being a firefighter: Fighting fires could give you cancer! <http://bit.ly/17qJoT>

Which #UCDavis firefighter is addicted to the food at the dining commons (& turns salad bar items into a culinary work of art)? <http://bit.ly/1pK5Ox0>

Use a single exclamation point to signal excitement.

In VERY RARE instances (major celebrity appearances, top awards, international recognition, etc.) multiple exclamation points may be used (but think judiciously about whether the situation warrants more than one).

Use an ellipsis (three periods, no spaces) to show where something has been omitted (as in a quote that's been shortened) OR (in rare instances) to signal suspense.

More meaningful relationships, heightened understanding, safer situations for firefighters...and a better representation of the community! @FireChiefT on his work to increase inclusion in the fire service: <http://bit.ly/1udWRKZ>

Em dashes can be used to set off various parts of a sentence.

How To: To make an em dash (—) on a Mac, hold down SHIFT+OPTION+hyphen. NEVER use a hyphen (-) instead of an em dash. No spaces before or after the em dash.

"Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling."—Walt Whitman

Meet this year's UCDFD Freshman Welcome T-shirt—just the latest must have swag from @UCDavisFire: <http://bit.ly/1uRPIAm>

Platform-Specific Guidelines/Formatting

Twitter

- Guidelines on Characters
 - Twitter allows only 280 characters per Tweet.
 - Photos no longer count for characters.
 - Links will account for only 23 characters regardless of how long or short the link is.
- Guidelines on Mentions
 - Include relevant mentions (@account) as long as that account is active.
 - Avoid using more than 3 mentions in a single post.
 - Cite the source of an article or news item by tagging the relevant account at the end of the message in brackets.

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Today's firefighter is less likely to embrace industry traditions than previous generations: <http://bit.ly/1sbrdAp> [[@fireengineering](#)]

- Guidelines on Links
 - Shorten all links using the auto link shortening feature in Sprout Social (bit.ly).
- Guidelines on Hashtags
 - Try to include at least one hashtag per post. Avoid using 3+ hashtags in a single post.
- Guidelines on General Formatting
 - Contractions are acceptable.
 - Never add “nd,” “st” or “th” to a date.
 - Abbreviate months according to AP Style: Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.
 - Abbreviate days of the week only if necessary: Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur., Fri., Sat., Sun.
 - You may leave the periods out of am/pm (7 am, 8 pm).
 - The typical tweet format should be: headline, link and hashtag.
 - Replace “and” with ampersand (&), NOT plus (+) to save characters when necessary.
- Guidelines on General Twitter Etiquette
 - Use MT to signal when a quoted tweet has been modified or shortened.
 - When quoting tweets always add something new before the RT or MT.

The university has its own fire dept too! MT @ucdavis Morning UC Davis! Check out 8 things everyone should know about our campus: bit.ly/xCy5hk

- Native RTs (not quoting) on our account should be reserved for sharing information from the Chancellor, Provost, and main UC Davis accounts.

Facebook

- Guidelines on Characters
 - There are no character limits on Facebook, but brevity is encouraged.
- Guidelines on Mentions
 - Include any relevant mentions, as long as the account is ACTIVE and the names of the mentioned accounts aren't so long as to be cumbersome.
- Guidelines on Links
 - Shorten all links using Sprout Social (bit.ly).
 - For a post where you don't want the preview to show, use a shortened link in Sprout Social (bit.ly) in the message itself. However, use the link preview if you are attaching some sort of other media (picture/video) to your post.
 - Delete the text URL from your post if displaying the link preview.
- Guidelines on General Formatting
 - Use line breaks.

YouTube

- Give videos descriptive names to support SEO.
- Include relevant hyperlinks after description.

Instagram

- Guidelines on Characters
 - There are no character limits on Instagram, but brevity is encouraged.
- Guidelines on Mentions

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- Include any relevant mentions, as long as the account is ACTIVE and the names of the mentioned accounts aren't so long as to be cumbersome.
- Guidelines on Links
 - Do not use links in Instagram captions. They do not work. If you need to use a link in your post, in the captions let them know that your main link will direct them to the link you want to promote by including "More: Link in bio."
 - We recommend only changing the link for 24 hours. You need to change it back to your main link, as to not confuse followers that didn't see the post.
- Guidelines on Hashtags
 - Use 3 to 5 hashtags for each post.
 - A good rule of thumb is to research hashtags' popularity before you start composing. Keeping the number of hashtags in your posts under 5 ensures your captions can be easily read. Choose hashtags that are relevant to the post using the Goldilocks Rule of Thumb: Not too broad (*#TGIF*) and not too unique (*#HeckYeahItsTheWeekend*).
 - Do not repeat the same hashtags on every post. *This can get picked up as spam. Spam = Shadow banning.*
 - List all hashtags within the first comment of an Instagram post rather than the caption.
 - Follow 5 relevant hashtags to increase visibility.
- Guidelines on General Instagram Etiquette
 - Do not edit your caption 24 hours after posting. *This could limit your visibility in the feed.*
 - Do not delete your post and then repost it. *Same reason as above.*
 - Respond to comments left on your post within 60 minutes whenever possible.
 - Responses to comments should be 4 or more words to count as an engagement.
- Recommendations
 - Utilize Instagram Stories. The more regularly UCDFD posts to Instagram Stories the more we are giving our audience an opportunity to engage. The more they engage with our Instagram Story (*views, direct messages, etc.*), the more likely our engaged audience will see your organic content in their feeds.
 - High quality visuals are a must.
 - Captions must be clear and error free, engaging, and include a clear call to action.
 - Contests: drive engagement, help us gain new followers and keep people coming back. Remember to make Instagram contests unique. Ask people to repost images or use branded hashtags.
 - Ask questions: What's the best way to get a response? Ask a question and get users' opinions about our services. Always remember to engage with the answers.
 - Post from unique locations: Users tend to interact when they see others in their city. Post from a variety of different locations to pique people's interest. When followers see you're somewhere they frequent or doing something they enjoy, engagement is more likely.
 - Use Geo Locations: Instagram users use geo locations to find content tagged at that specific location. Always use your geo-tag features from wherever you're posting to boost your audience's size. For example, if you were debating on where to eat and wanted to see authentic images of the food and decor, search a restaurant's geo tag.

Posting Cadence

Twitter

- 1 native post/day–5 to 8 RT/MT posts/day

Instagram

- 1 post/day

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Facebook

- 1 post/day

YouTube

- Varies

Hashtags

Hashtags were initially developed with one objective in mind: to categorize themes and campaigns. While originally used purely for utility, now they are used in all sorts of creative ways. They draw attention to a particular word within copy and can add a comical or emotional twist to a post when appropriate.

When developing any sort of hashtag consider these two thoughts:

- Will I use this hashtag again? If the answer is “yes” – go for it.
- Is that hashtag used by more than five other groups out there in the Social Sphere? If the answer is “yes”, consider picking a different hashtag, because the goal is to have content that is associated with said social post to stand out.

The best way to implement a hashtag is to use it and continue using it. Use the hashtags that the primary UC Davis social media accounts do and add applicable UCDFD tags as needed.

UC Davis Hashtags

#UCDavis
#GoAgs
#AggiePride
#OurUCDavis
#ServiceLeadership (to be used for unit leaders)

UCDFD Hashtags

#ucdfd
#ucdavisfire
#MondayMotivation
#TrainingTuesdays
#Humpday
#TBT
#FeatureFriday
#CPRSaturday
#SelflessSunday

Visual Guidelines

Social Media Image Sizes

Facebook Image Sizes

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Business Page Profile Picture

Facebook recently changed its Profile image for Business Pages to appear to the left side of the screen. The new look helps Facebook Business Pages stand out among personal accounts. However, the dimensions are the same, but the photo appears on the page slightly different.

Specs:

- Must be at least 180 x 180 pixels.
- Photo will appear on page as 170 x 170 pixels on desktop, 128 x 128 on smartphones, and 36 x 36 on most feature phones.
- Photo thumbnail will appear throughout Facebook at 32 x 32 pixels.
- Business Page images will be cropped to fit a square.

Cover Photo

A Facebook cover photo will only appear on your Facebook timeline, but it's a lot bigger than the profile picture, which gives you more freedom to choose something creative

Specs:

- Appear on page at 820 x 312 pixels. Anything less will be stretched.
- Minimum size of 400 x 150 pixels.
- Displays at 820 x 312 pixels on desktop and 640 x 360 pixels on smartphones.
- Doesn't display on feature phones.
- For best results, upload an sRGB JPG file less than 100 KB.
- Images with a logo or text may be best as a PNG file.
- Business Page dimensions are exactly the same as personal accounts.

Shared Image

A shared image is one of the most common forms of sharing on Facebook. These images will always appear on your timeline, and ideally they will show up in most of your followers' News Feeds — though with the decrease in organic reach, it's unlikely that everyone will see your post. The more people engage with your post, the more likely it is that the rest of your followers and their followers will see that activity.

Specs:

- Recommended upload size of 1,200 x 630 pixels.
- Will appear in feed at a max width of 470 pixels (will scale to a max of 1:1).
- Will appear on page at a max width of 504 pixels (will scale to a max of 1:1).

Shared Link

Very similar to posting a shared image, but it gives you even more fields to work with. You can choose to create a shared link with a small square image to the left and text on the right, or with a larger rectangular image on top with text underneath.

Specs:

- Recommended upload size of 1,200 x 628 pixels.
- Square Photo: Minimum 154 x 154px in feed.
- Square Photo: Minimum 116 x 116 on page.
- Rectangular Photo: Minimum 470 x 246 pixels in feed.
- Rectangular Photo: Minimum 484 x 252 on page.
- Facebook will scale photos under the minimum dimensions. For better results, increase image resolution at the same scale as the minimum size.

Highlighted Image

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This image is going to be housed on your timeline, but it is going to take up a great deal more space than a shared link or image, so it's a good place to celebrate the victories that keep you going!

Specs:

- Will appear on your page at 843 x 504 pixels.
- Choose a higher resolution at that scale for better quality.

Event Image

Facebook Events help capture the attention of users and cut through the noise on Facebook. Reminders are sent to your audience and having a good space with an even better image is important. Make sure you have the right dimensions down for a Facebook Event cover photo.

Specs:

- Facebook will scale down to minimum dimensions: 470 × 174.
- Shows in feed: 470 × 174.

Twitter Image Sizes

Profile Photo

Our Twitter profile photo is the main image that represents our brand across the network. It's going to be seen across the site in a number of places by a number of people so make sure it's of the highest quality. Here's the places your profile photo will be visible on the site.

On Your Page: The largest display of your profile picture is on your homepage and can be viewed by your followers as well as individuals who stumble upon your page.

In-Stream: A smaller version of your profile picture appears in a follower's Twitter stream every time you Tweet. It also appears in the stream of your followers' followers every time you're retweeted.

Who to Follow: Your profile picture is also going to appear next to a link to your page in the "Who to follow" box. This is located directly to the right of your twitter stream. Choose a recognizable image here.

Specs:

- Square Image recommended 400 x 400 pixels.
- Maximum file size 2 MB.
- Image types include: JPG, GIF or PNG.

Header

Photo

Your header photo is the image that spans the top of your Twitter profile page. It's quite a bit larger than your profile photo so make sure to save it at the highest resolution possible. Because you have more room to be creative with this picture and it will likely be the first thing your visitors see, make it something captivating.

Specs:

- Recommended 1,500 x 500 pixels.
- Maximum file size of 5 MB.
- Image types include: JPG, GIF or PNG.

In-Stream

Photo

Twitter users can attach photos to any of their Tweets. Luckily, Twitter updated to no longer count

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characters against your tweet limit. Uploaded photos will appear in your followers' streams and the streams of their followers (if retweeted).

It's important to note that Twitter may collapse your photo into a smaller version to fit in a user's stream. Make sure Twitter displays the portion of the photo you want followers to see by setting the width of your image to fit the minimum requirements. Also, horizontally center your content to avoid odd cropping (e.g. vertical photos do not well).

Specs:

- Minimum to appear expanded 440 x 220 pixels (a 2:1 ratio).
- Can tweet up to 4 images at one time.
- Can edit images if tweeting from Twitter iOS or Android app.
- Maximum to appear expanded 1024 x 512 pixels.
- Appears in stream collapsed at 506 x 253 pixels on desktop.
- Maximum file size of 5 MB for photos, and 5 MB for animated GIFs on mobile and 15 MB on web.

Instagram Image Sizes

Profile Picture

Instagram is based on visuals, which should be an indication of how important it is to follow these image size guidelines. Ensure your profile image is recognizable so users can find you even easier through search or explore.

Specs:

- Appear on your profile at 110 x 110 pixels.
- Square photo: make sure to maintain an aspect ratio of 1:1.

Photo Thumbnails

When someone goes to your page, they'll be presented with all of your content arranged in rows of thumbnails. These smaller renditions of your images and videos will expand when clicked and include a place for people to comment.

Specs:

- The thumbnails will appear on the page at 161 x 161 pixels.
- Square photo: make sure to maintain an aspect ratio of 1:1 ratio.

Photo Size

Instagram is all about the images and videos presented in your followers' feed. In fact, Instagram higher resolution photos when taken from the native application. If you decided to upload a photo or video from any other device, the resolution will be much lower.

Specs:

- The size of Instagram images has been increased to 1080 x 1080 pixels.
- Instagram still scales these photos down to 612 x 612 pixels.
- Appear in feed at 510 x 510 pixels.
- Square or rectangle photos: make sure to maintain an aspect ratio between 1.91:1 and 4:5 ratio.
- Smaller featured header images appear as 204 x 204 pixels, and larger featured header images appear as 409 x 409 pixels.

Stories

With more than 300 million daily users, Instagram Stories are a popular source of visuals on the app.

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There are both video and image options available to publish. And while this feature is meant to be ephemeral, it's possible to upload your own content.

Specs:

- Recommended resolution is 1080 x 1920.
- Minimum resolution is 600 x 1067.
- Aspect ratio is 9:16.
- Max file size is 4GB.

NOTE: Cover images should be the same across ALL platforms.

General Imagery Guidelines

- Design applications like Canva can provide visuals/templates.
- Social Media Committee Members are expected to follow all copyright and intellectual property laws when posting to any social network. Always get permission to use copyrighted material, and always give credit for the material.

Photography

- Always use a high-resolution photo or video when posting on social media to encourage user engagement and reach.
- The UC Davis image database is an excellent resource for photos.
- No filters should be applied to photos.
- No borders should be applied to photos.
- The standard aspect ratio of photos should be 16:9 and landscape in orientation.
- Photos should be composed using the rule of thirds.

Graphics/Logos

- All avatars should prominently display the UCDFD logo.

Video

- Videos must maintain a 16:9 aspect ratio.
- In order to qualify as full HD, your dimensions must be at least 1,280 x 720 pixels.
- Captions must be burned into big production video content; social video content should at least contain a relevant caption.

Inappropriate Content

- Posts should not contain defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous content.
- Posts should not contain foul or questionable language of any kind.
- Posts should be “neutral” in nature and not engage in political issues.
- Exercise caution with regards to copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.

Questionable Post Removal Procedures

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When a questionable post is discovered, Social Media Committee Members should immediately contact the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief will then determine whether or not the post is acceptable. If found unacceptable, the post will be hidden using the “Hide from Page” editing tool.

Posts in conflict with the University/Fire Department’s Core Values are considered unacceptable.

Those whose posts are deemed questionable will be warned with a private message. Individuals who continue to communicate with questionable posts after being warned will be blocked.

Responding to Death and Tragedy

Before we decide to respond to a tragedy on social media, we should think about why we want to post. If you are not personally and directly affected by the tragedy, we should be honest with ourselves about our motivations for making a comment on social media. Do we want attention? Do we think it’s expected? Do we feel a strong sense of grief? If our answer is one of the first two, it may be better to not respond.

Sadly, death and tragedy impact our profession almost every day. While we care deeply about our fellow firefighters and about those impacted by tragedy, it is important to put the desire to post about death and tragedy in perspective using these guidelines:

Know When to Care and When to Be Quiet

Stop all automated posts when a significant tragedy occurs. It should not be “business as usual” during, or in the direct aftermath of an impactful event.

Do not post from the brand that “our hearts and prayers are with the survivors” (or similar). The only exception is if the events occurred in a city/state/region where our organization/brand is based, and that fact is widely known.

Do not post “thoughts and prayers” while the crisis is still unfolding. Nobody needs to be comforted by an organization/brand. That’s not what organizations do and not what organizations are for. People provide comfort, not organizations.

Silence may be the strongest sign of respect that can be shown

Only Tribute Our Own

In the case of a high-profile, celebrity death like David Bowie, Steve Jobs, or Robin Williams the decision on whether or not to acknowledge the passing in your brand’s social media should be easy to make. Just ask yourself this question:

“Did our brand ever have an actual relationship with this person, in any significant way?”

If you had a relationship, a tribute is relevant. If you didn’t, it isn’t.

The Power of the Person

The best way to come across as human, is using a true human voice. We have many in our department who we can call to action.

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As Fire Chief, union president, or fire department employee, tweeting with your personal account will most often come across as sincerer than an organization/brand name. If you want to make a difference, decide with your management team to donate to relief efforts or offer services to those affected.

Legal Considerations

The Privacy Act of 1974

The Privacy Act includes provisions that protect personally identifiable information (PII) of citizens. As a result, agencies need to take precautions not to report information that can be used to uniquely identify, contact or locate an individual. A common form of this is usernames, which is why creating influencer lists isn't recommended. A username is a unique identifier and can be linked to a specific individual. So, maintaining a list of usernames would be considered a violation of privacy.

In the supporting document, the Guidance for Agency Use of Third-Party Websites and Applications, it's stated that if the collection of PII is necessary, then the agency should collect only the minimum required to accomplish a purpose.

It's recommended that social media managers working in government meet with legal counsel and privacy officers when developing social listening and analysis strategies to ensure that appropriate policies are followed, and any necessary protections have been taken.

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) prohibits the collection of individually identifiable information from children under the age of 13. On your website, you must include a privacy policy that indicates when and how to seek consent from a parent or guardian.

While most social networks have an age requirement—13 years—that doesn't mean younger individuals aren't participating. Signing up for a social network is a fairly unregulated process: All it takes is selecting a different age from the drop-down box or entering in a different year of birth.

The Federal Records Act of 1950

The Federal Records Act requires the preservation of any official "record," which includes all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials and other documentary materials made or received by an agency of the government. In 2014, the act was amended to include electronic documents.

As individuals create, edit, comment on and share content on social media, that results in the creation of federal records. While it's the responsibility of the agency to determine which records they create or receive, it's best to include all ingoing and outgoing social media, including posts, comments, photos and reviews on third-party platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn.