



OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996

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USCC POLICY MEMORANDUM 15

SUBJECT: Professional Online Conduct

1. REFERENCES:

- a. Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, (Army Command Policy), 6 November 2014.
- b. AR 210-26, United States Military Academy, 6 September 2011
- c. AR 360-1, The Army Public Affairs Program
- d. ADRP-1, (The Army Profession), June 2015
- e. U.S. Army Social Media Handbook, March 2014
- f. ALARACT message 122/2015, 27 July 2015
- g. United States Military Academy (USMA) Character Development Strategy
- h. Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)

2. PURPOSE: To establish the United States Corps of Cadets (USCC) Professional Online Conduct Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS:

a. **Online Conduct:** The use of electronic communication in an official or personal capacity that is consistent with Army Values and standards of conduct.

b. **Online Misconduct:** The use of electronic communication to inflict harm. Examples include, but are not limited to: harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking, discrimination, retaliation, or any other types of misconduct that undermine dignity and respect. As members of the profession of arms, insubordination or disrespecting your chain of command is unacceptable behavior.

c. **Online Unprofessional Behavior:** The use of electronic communication, to include, but not limited to, e-mails, social media, blogs (attributed and anonymous platforms), that are at variance with or contrary to the seven Army Values and the Army Ethic, as defined by ADRP-1, page 1-2. Social media allows us to live with a set of values online that is different from the values we would live in public, but that is not what America expects of us as leaders who have

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entrusted us with their own sons and daughters. As leaders and members of the profession of arms, we should live both public and private lives consistent with the ideals of Duty, Honor, and Country and our Army Values that include respect, integrity and personal courage. Examples of online unprofessional behavior could be, but are not limited to, attempting to sell photos on-line without someone's knowledge or permission, or posting insubordinate text or photos about a member of the chain of command.

d. **Electronic Communication:** The transfer of information (signs, writing, images, sounds, or data) transmitted by computer, phone, or other electronic device. Electronic Communications include, but are not limited to: text messages, emails, chats, instant messaging, screensavers, blogs, social media sites, electronic device applications, and web/video conferencing.

e. **Online-Related Incident:** A categorization used to track reported cases of misconduct that involve electronic communication. An online-related incident is one where an electronic communication is used as the primary means for committing misconduct or the electronic communication, standing alone, constitutes the most serious offense among a number of offenses.

4. **SCOPE:** This policy is applicable to all USCC personnel, to include Military, Civilian Staff, Faculty and Cadets.

5. **POLICY:** As members of USCC, individuals' interactions offline and online reflect on the Army and its values. The Army Values apply to all aspects of our life, including online conduct. Harassment, bullying, hazing, stalking, discrimination, retaliation, and any other type of conduct that undermines dignity and respect are not consistent with the Academy's Mission or the Army Ethic and negatively impact trust, command climate and readiness.

a. When using electronic communication devices, members of the USCC should apply: "Think, Type, Post." "Think" about how others will interpret the message. "Type" a communication that is consistent with Army Values and reflects positively on the Army Profession. "Post" only those messages that are consistent with the Army Ethic and demonstrate dignity and respect for self and others.

b. Social media is not private. As we have seen, what we post online has the potential to "go viral." What we may have only intended to be seen by a small group of people could wind up being seen by millions. Regardless of privacy settings or posting anonymously, anything posted or uploaded to social media can eventually be traced.

c. This policy should not be construed to prohibit otherwise permissible online conduct. Online social media is a common tool for correspondence that is utilized by individuals of all professions, including members of USCC and Army as a whole. Service members and civilians who participate in online interactions will not be disciplined provided that those interactions do not conflict with this policy, the UCMJ, or other applicable regulations.

d. Members of USCC will NOT participate in or condone online unprofessional behavior. This includes posting or sharing photos or information which is prejudicial to good order and discipline, interferes with or prevents the orderly accomplishment of the mission, tends to discredit the military service, or presents a clear danger to loyalty, mission, or morale of other military or civilian personnel. This restriction is not limited to a personal page and includes public

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domains. Examples could be, but are not limited to: Jodel, Facebook, blogging, Twitter, and Instagram.

e. Information that pertains to military matters, national security issues, or subjects of significant concern to the DOD must be cleared by appropriate security review and PA offices prior to release. This includes material placed on the internet or released via similar electronic media. Prior to posting information that may pertain to the categories above, individuals must ensure compliance with AR 360-1, Chapter 5, "Release of Information" and Chapter 6, "Speakers and Clearance of Speeches, Manuscripts, and Internal Information."

f. Personnel experiencing online misconduct and/or unprofessional behavior should promptly report matters to the Chain of Command. Alternative avenues for reporting and information include: Family Support Services, Equal Opportunity (EO), Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP), the Inspector General, and the Provost Marshal.

6. COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES: All leaders in USCC will reinforce a climate where current and future members of the Army team, including Soldiers, Cadets, Army Civilians, Contractors and Family Members, understand that online misconduct and online unprofessional behavior is inconsistent with Army Values.

7. COMMAND OPTIONS: Any individual who violates this policy may be subject to criminal and/or administrative action.

a. **Hazing and Bullying:** The Army is a values-based organization where everyone is expected to do what is right by treating all persons as they should be treated – with dignity and respect. Hazing and bullying, as defined in AR 600-20, para. 4-19, and other behaviors that undermine dignity and respect are fundamentally in opposition to our values and are prohibited. Such conduct is punishable under the UCMJ.

b. **Conduct Service Discrediting:** All USCC members are required to act as leaders of character. Certain conduct that is prejudicial of good order and discipline in the armed forces or conduct which brings discredit upon the armed forces is punishable under the UCMJ. Examples include, but are not limited to, possessing or viewing child pornography, causing pornographic material to be viewed by another person, making disloyal statements, fraternization, gambling with subordinates, stalking and harassing others.

c. **Conduct Unbecoming:** All USCC members are expected to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen. Behavior in an official capacity which seriously compromises the person's character as a gentleman or lady, or action or behavior in an unofficial or private capacity which seriously compromises the person's standing as an Officer, NCO, Civilian, and Cadet or Cadet Candidate is punishable under UCMJ, Articles 92 and 133. Examples may include using insulting or defamatory language to another individual in that person's presence or about that individual to other military persons.

d. **Disrespect:** Social media provides the opportunity for Soldiers to speak freely about their activities, interests and opinions. However, Soldiers must discern the difference between speaking freely on social media and engaging in communication that is considered disrespectful

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toward superior officers. Using abusive epithets or other contemptuous or denunciatory language toward superior officers offline or through social media is punishable under the UCMJ.

8. **EXPIRATION:** This policy memorandum remains in effect until superseded or rescinded.

9. **POC:** The proponent for this policy memorandum is SCPME at ext. 3028.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Gilland', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

STEVEN W. GILLAND
Brigadier General, USA
Commandant of Cadets