

FRSC IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA:

Ups & Down



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OUTLINES

Introduction

- The 6-Es Strategy
- Engaging the Public through Public Education
- FRSC Image
- Gains(UPs)
- The DOWNs
- Dealing with the Media/Public and Way forward
- Directives and Circulars
- Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Road Safety Corps as a frontier organization in Road Safety matters, has its image affected through the process of meeting its Statutory Mandates. These Mandates include:

- Making the highway safe for motorists and other road users.
- Recommending works and devices designed to eliminate or minimize accidents on the highways and advising the Federal and State Governments including the Federal Capital Territory Administration and relevant governmental agencies on the localities where such works and devices are required

- And Educating motorists and members of the public on the importance of discipline on the highway

- And these mandates are carried out through the 6 Es of safety which are,
Education,
 - **Engineering,**
 - **Environment,**
 - **Enforcement,**
 - **Emergency Management Services** and
 - **Evaluation**

The 6-Es Strategy is adopted for Nigeria Road Safety Management;



Education;



Enforcement;



Engineering;



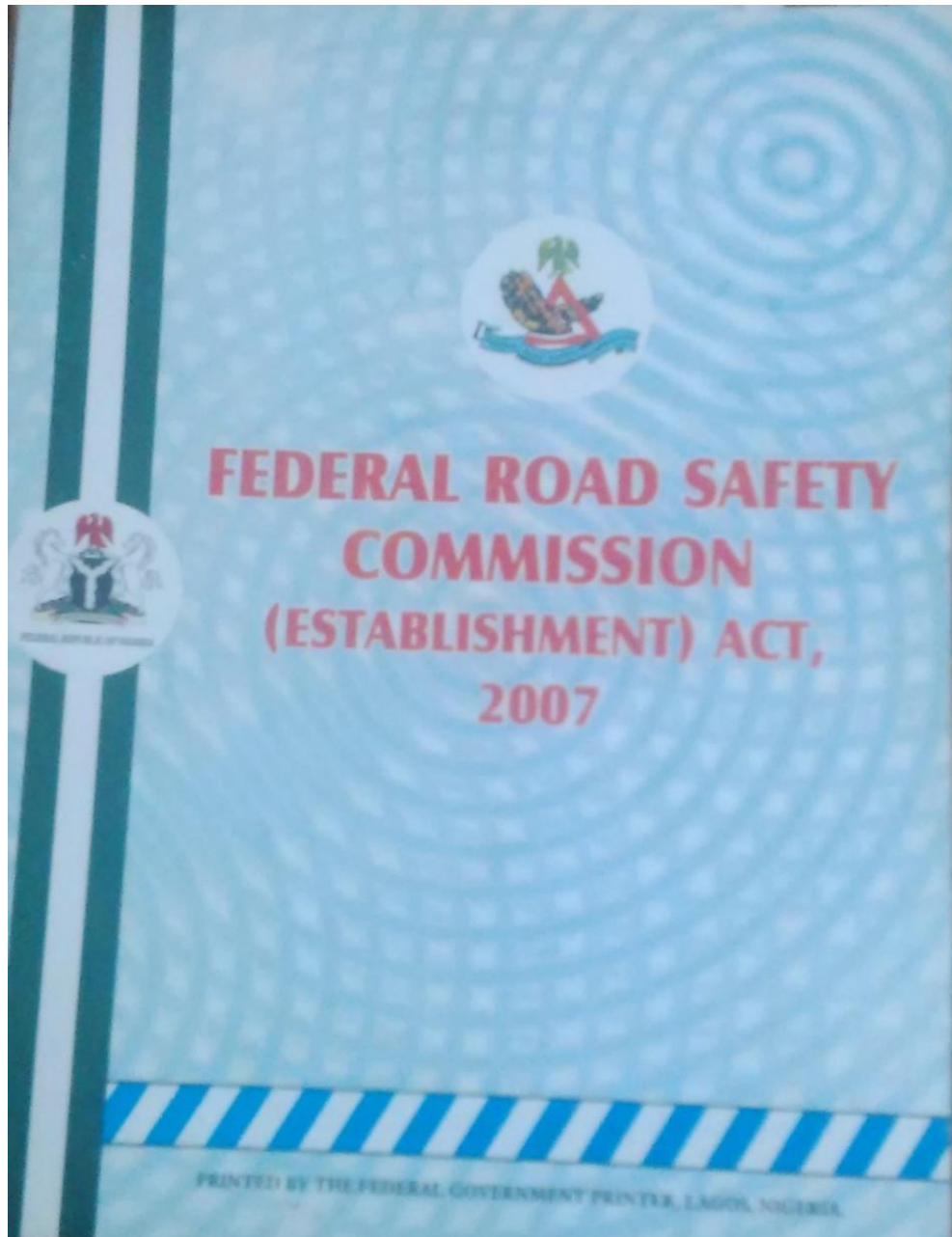
Environment;



Emergency Management Services;



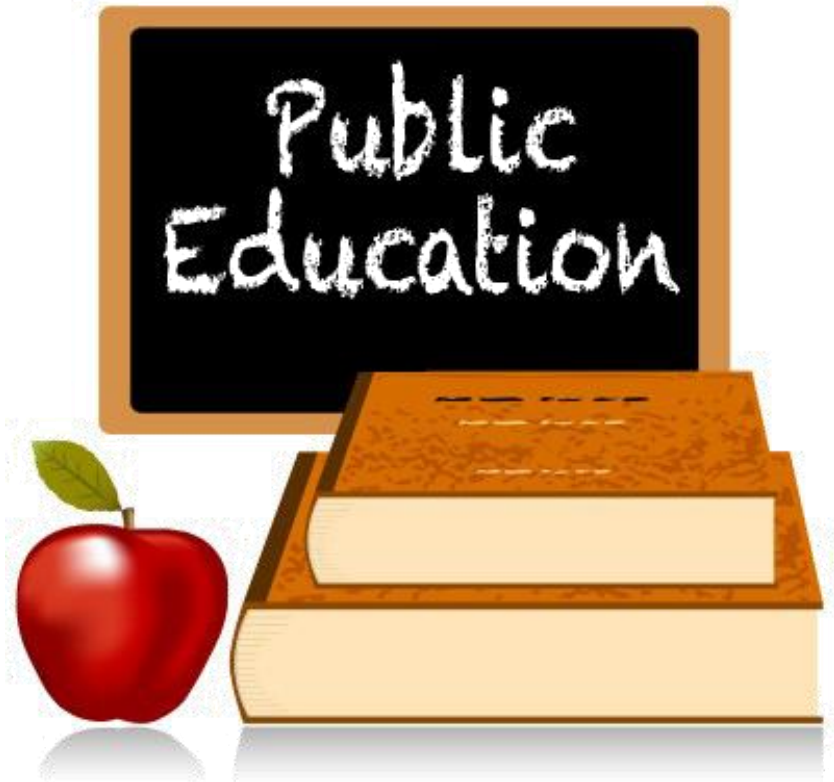
Evaluation



Section 3 of the FRSC Establishment Act, 2007 outlines the various statutory functions of the Corps, one of which is "to engage drivers, motorists and other members of the public generally on the proper use of the highway". Hence, in carrying out that statutory function, the need of a robust public engagement cannot be over emphasized

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION

- According to Victoria Road Safety Education Action plan, Australia, 2012-2013, public education on road safety plays a vital role in the attitude and disposition of road users to traffic rules and regulations:



a. Shaping the attitude of road users

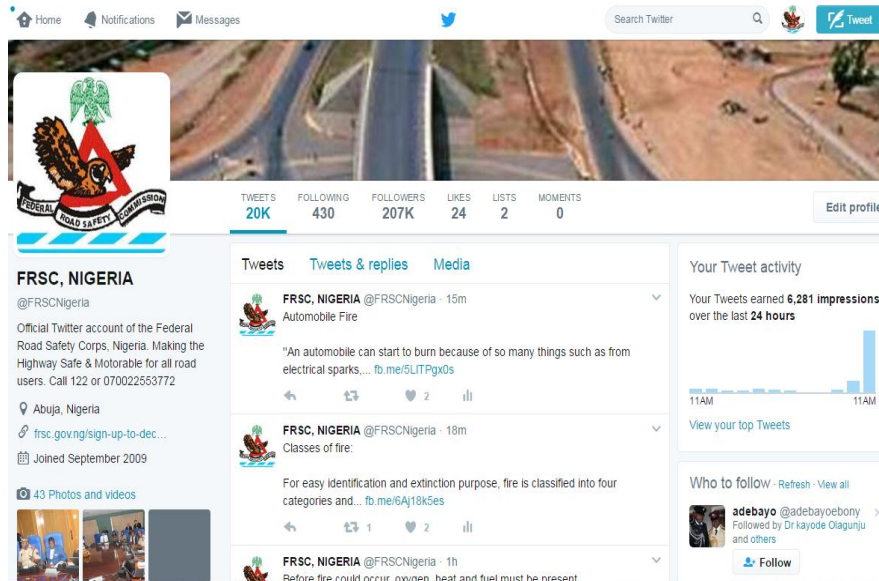
- b. Influencing the minds of motorists positively
- c. Ensuring the development and sustenance of a responsible driving populace
- d. Imparting appropriate road safety norms in drivers, pedestrians, children, youths, cyclists, etc
- e. Preservation of lives and property
- f. Building a new generation of safety compliant drivers and pedestrians

So, with all these in place, the Corps has a policy for a planned and continuous communication programme which is designed to build and sustain mutual understanding and cordial relationship between the Corps and its public.

This will also serve as an avenue for enlightening and educating the general public.

And to achieve the above, the following media are adopted; Television, Radio, Bill boards, publications(Highway code, flying vehicles), and new media like; facebook, twitter, Youtube, and many more have been co-opted into this.

PICTURES OF SOME MEDIA ADOPTED



Other ways adopted by the Corps which may also affect the FRSC/Public relationship

- a. Motor park rallies
- b. Drama/music
- c. Motorized Public Enlightenment campaign /(carnival)
- d. Routine operations (engage offenders during operational activities)
- e. Road safety clubs
- f. Special marshals

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS.....



FRSC IMAGE

The Corps' image is largely depended on the perception of the public, including the media on meeting its mandate. The perception of the public on the performance of the Corps on service delivery is critical for the rating of the Corps. Our individual and collective activities rub off our image. Positive acts give endearing image while negative acts could lead to repulsion or rejection of the Corps.

The Corps has strived over the years to endear itself to the public. The media provides the mirror/platform for which the public assess the organizational performance of the Corps. The media would report both the positive and negative activities of the Corps and its men which in return create public perception of FRSC. The media can always influence the image of any organization usually the ones that are praised by the media are also perceived to be performing while the media will also report the negative perception of the organization.

So, both the media and the public work hand in hand in creating the image rating of any organization. The FRSC relies heavily on the media to convey its public enlightenment messages and also the feedback on its activities. There are Ups and Downs in our Public/Media image.

GAINS (Ups)

Improved
Professionalism

Reduction in RTC

Robust Data Base

Awards and ISO
Certification

Improved relationship
with stakeholders

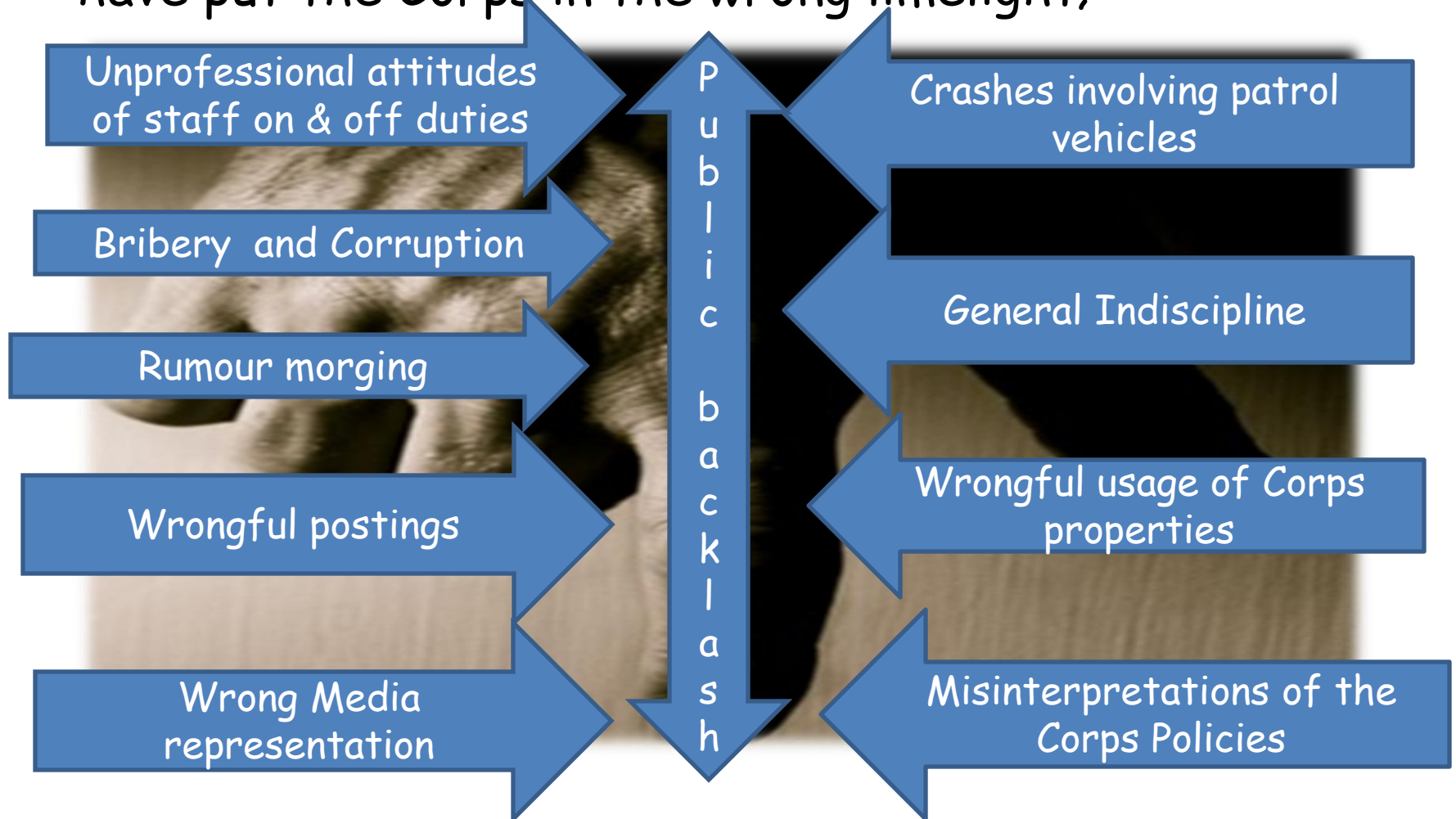
Improved Cordial
relationship with sister
Agencies

Public Enlightenment

Increased Feedbacks
and Interactions

THE DOWNS

While the management and most staff of the Corps are engaging in rigorous and constant public enlightenment, some conducts of a few FRSC staff on and off duties have put the Corps in the wrong limelight;



THE FLAWS.....



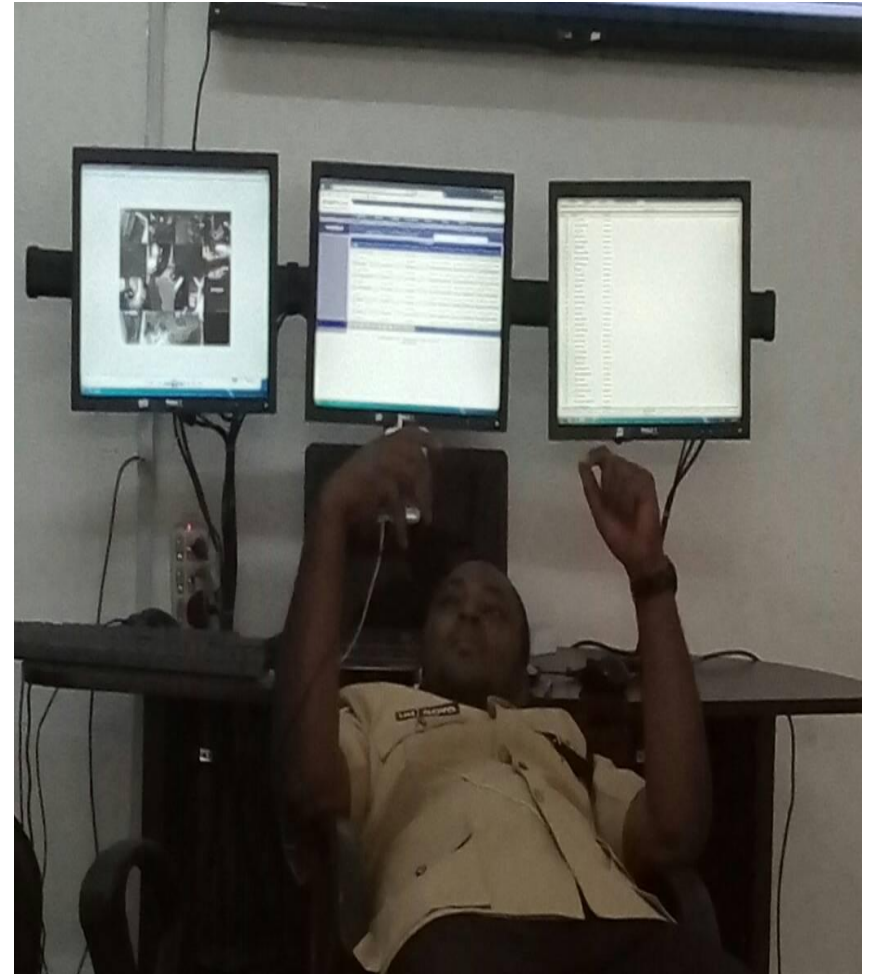
OVERLOADING AND INDECENT USE OF PATROL VEHICLES

THE FLAWS.....



UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCTS OF STAFF

THE FLAWS.....



WRONGFUL/INAPPROPRIATE POSTING ON FRSC SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

CAUTION

The conducts of our men affect positively or otherwise the public and media perception of the Corps. Every staff should also remember that the public sympathy will always be on the side of the member of the public who are seen as victims of aggression and persecution by the law enforcement agencies.

**DEALING WITH
THE
MEDIA/PUBLICS
AND
WAY FORWARD!**

In order for the Corps to tackle the issues on negative public and media image, the following steps should be adopted;

- Continuous adherence to the laid down regulations; maintenance of discipline, FRSC Social media standards and guidelines, Standard operational guidelines and many other documents guiding our mode of operation. For further enquiry kindly click on this link <http://www.frsc.gov.ng/FSMSGUIDELINES.pdf>

- Institute practices and procedures that anticipate & respond to public expectations, concerns and issues.
- Public Engagements, Advocacy visits and media parley.
- Build sustainable and on-going relationships with key stakeholders
- All staff should be environmentally friendly and socially responsible in dispensing all statutory mandates of the Corps
- The need to know concept: classified, secret and restricted information should not be made known to those who are not authorized to have such.
- Standard and effective management of all social media platform
- Staff training should be encouraged at all levels
- Staff should be politically correct in all utterances and policies

- Security of document: there should be proper handling of documents and anytime there are visitors, documents should be faced down or removed totally from the table.
- Circulars and Memos meant only for staff should not be displayed on board or any other place where members of the public will have access.
- Positive attitudes of staff off and on duties should be encouraged
- Careless statements of the Corps' policies and that of the government should be avoided.
- Creativity and innovation: All Commands should be creative and innovating in public education that will enhance the image of the Corps.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution should be employed where it is considered a better option

- Stakeholders Engagement: the Corps should continually engage its stakeholders and carry them along in their policies. By so doing, when there are issues and misrepresentations to be addressed, same platforms will be handy in resolving the issues.
- The Corps should stand by his men when some members of the public are wrong and be ready to prosecute where necessary those smearing the Corps' Image.
- Mentoring: all staff should have mentors that will enhance their career and progress in life. Officers should also have mentees to guide the younger ones.
- Exemplary Leadership: the ways of life and leadership qualities of those in authority in the Corps should be positive and inspiring.
- Cleanliness of the office environment
- patrol vehicles should be kept in good shapes as they speak volume in terms of our image as Road Safety Organization.

- We should be mindful of where we go and who we relate with as the actions and inactions of our "friends" could rub off the image of the Corps.
- Whistle blower: staff should report all negative activities/ habits of their colleagues to the appropriate authorities.
- Punishment and Reward system: that the Corps should continue to commend excellent and good conducts and also should not hesitate to punish infractions
- Counselling: the Commanding and Senior officers should always counsel their staff
- Staff turnout is very important, they should be neatly dressed at all times
- Joint programmes with the media: FRSC should always partner with the media in some safety related programmes. FRSC and media should always work together in promoting safety awareness

REBRANDING THE CORPS



The Corps should sustain the act of rebranding his strategies and image. Services such as children program, public-private partnership and others, that endear us to the public should be promoted. And the Corps should always project the high flying officers. We should always identify and celebrate our poster boys as symbols of excellence

CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIP

Commanding officers should discourage a Farmer-Hoe Relationship. This is a kind of relationship where a farmer only remembers the hoe when tilling and harvesting and forgets the hoe, the moment he starts enjoying the proceeds of his/her farm. The Hoe is kept away until another planting season begins.

We should build Trust and cultivate positive media relationship, by so doing there will be no vacuum left for the media men/women to explore for negative and appalling reports about the Corps



DEALING WITH NEGATIVE PERCEPTION

There are bound to be misrepresentation and negative stories in the press. And when dealing with such, the Corps should adopt the following;

- No panic
- Analyse the issue objectively
- Consultation: the Command involve should provide briefs and the relevant office should also respond with appropriate damage control
- Respond professionally by bringing out the facts to correct misrepresentation and where the Corps is wrong we should be bold to accept and offer apology

- **The Media could be a good or bad friend, therefore manage them effectively.**



DIRECTIVES AND CIRCULARS

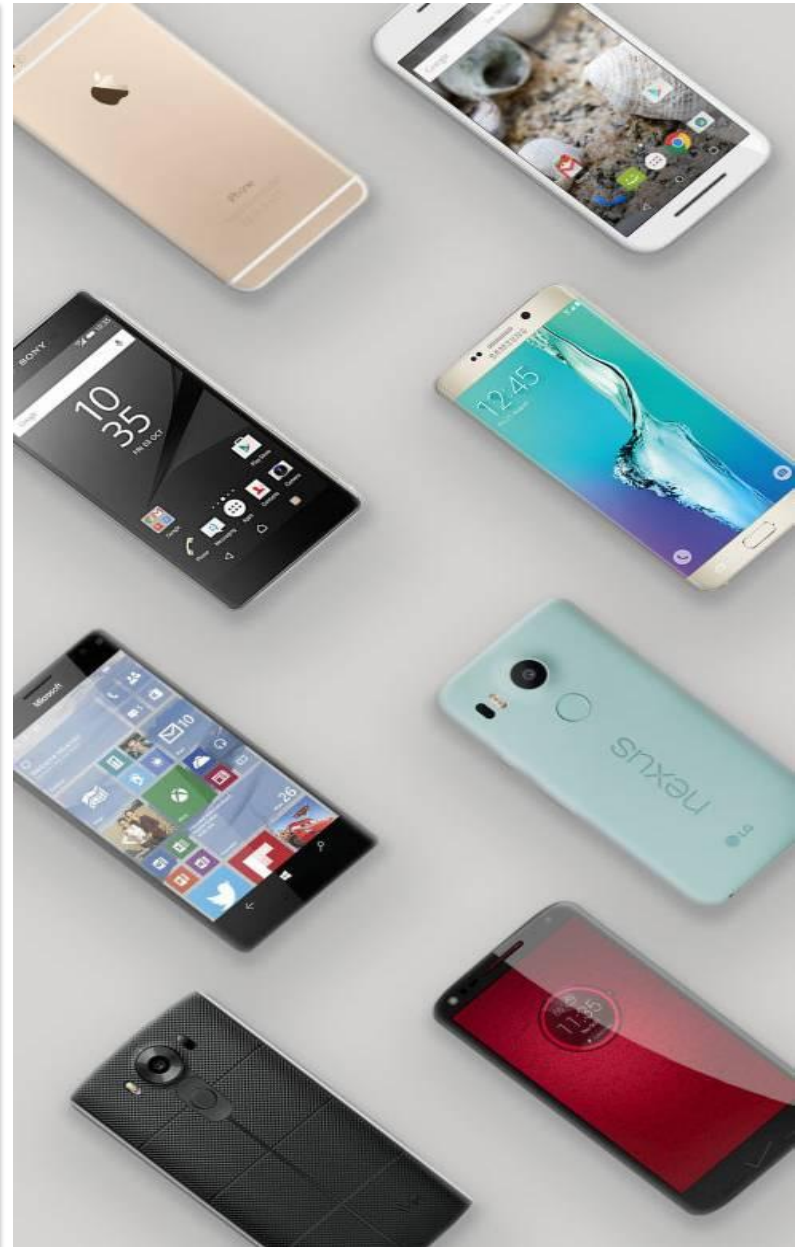
There has been series of directives and circulars sent to all Commands and Commanding officers, basically introducing us to FRSC Social Media standards and guidelines while others addressed the improper conducts of staff in the media and FRSC social media platforms e.g; the recent ones titled "Unguarded Post and Negative Comments By FRSC Staff on Social Media Platforms". These are listed for our benefits and reference;

Reference:

- A. FRSC/HQ/PRS/624/VOL.V/02 dated 28 April, 2017
- B. FRSC/HQ/PRS/624/VOL.IV/47 dated 04 Aug, 2016
- C. FRSC/HQ/PRS/624/VOL.III/39 dated 22 June, 2015

These Directives and Circulars are made available through the staff login in FRSC Website. All staff should be conversant with all circulars and comply appropriately

Everybody is now a reporter in this new age of smart phones and modern media. Nigeria alone has 167,371,945 mobile phones in circulation and this made us 7th in ranking of countries with the highest number of phones in the world (wikipedia). A negative conduct could go viral within seconds. Be CAREFUL



CONCLUSION

As staff of the FRSC, we are expected to key into management policies and also align with emerging trends on Information technology by acquainting ourselves with the needed working tools. Whichever way the public and the media portray the Corps is largely depended on our conducts and activities. Let us all join hands to sustain the good image of the Corps and rebrand on the negative perception the Corps may have had. It is our Corps and we should collectively and proudly present it as the best.

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Safety starts with
you

THANK
YOU