

GENERAL ORDER 13.3.8

Social Media

GENERAL ORDER CROSS-REFERENCE: 13.3.7

SUMMARY

Establishes policy governing the use of social media affecting the workplace and or the Department's ability to perform its mission.

DISCUSSION

Social media refers to digital communication platforms that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites, microblogging sites, photo and video sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and news sites. Some examples of social media include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Reddit
- Tumblr

These policies address the use of social media in general and not one particular form.

Social Media is defined as "all communication or posting of information or content of any sort on the Internet including the above listed platforms or your own or someone else's web log, blog, journal. This policy applies to employees when the comment on official City social media platforms.

POLICY

I

DEPARTMENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The Department endorses the secure use of social media as described below to enhance community engagement, information distribution, and neighborhood safety.

The Chief of Police Approves Official Department Social Media Accounts

The ISD Management Analyst maintains the Departments Social Media Accounts.

Department social media accounts shall prominently display the following information and/or statements:

1. Department contact information and a link to the Department website
2. That pages are maintained by the Department
3. The purpose and scope of the Department's presence on the websites
4. That the opinions expressed by visitors to the pages do not reflect the opinions of the Department
5. That posted comments will be monitored and that the Department reserves the right to hide (obscure, conceal, screen) from public view comments that are inconsistent with this policy at its discretion such as obscenities, hate speech, derogatory terms, off-topic comments, personal attacks, personal or defamatory remarks about a person's age, education, ethnicity, race, family status, gender, national origin, class, physical ability or qualities, religion, sexual orientation, thought processes or personality, any comments that jeopardize an ongoing investigation or prosecution, or that otherwise impair the Department's ability to provide effective law enforcement services to the community.
6. That any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure

The Investigative Services Division may use non-official social media accounts for investigative purposes with permission from the Investigative Services Division Lieutenant or Sergeant. ISD will maintain a log of all social media postings to non-official accounts.

II

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

This policy covers employee personal use of social media affecting the workplace and/or the Department's ability to perform its public mission.

The Department recognizes the role that social media plays in the personal lives of some Department employees. However, the personal use of social media can have bearing on employees in their official capacity as they are held to a high standard by the community. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit personal expression or online activities.

Engaging in prohibited speech outlined in this policy may provide grounds for discipline and may be used to undermine or impeach an officer's testimony in legal proceedings.

Employees shall not post speech that negatively impacts the Department's ability to serve the public. Employees may express themselves as private citizens on social media sites as long as employees do not:

1. Make, share, or comment in support of any posting that includes harassment, threats of violence, or similar conduct
2. Make, share, or comment in support of any posting that ridicules, maligns, disparages, expresses bias, or disrespect toward any race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or any other protected class of individuals
3. Make, share, or comment in support of any posting that suggests that Department personnel are engaged in behavior reasonably considered to be unlawful or reckless toward public safety
4. Otherwise violate any law or SPD policy

Employees shall make reasonable efforts to remove content appearing on their social media account that violates this policy upon learning of the offensive content.

Employees may not post privileged information or represent the Department. Employees shall not post or otherwise disseminate any confidential information or photographs they have access to as a result of their employment with the Department.

Employees may not make any statements, appearances, endorsements, or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of the Department.

Exception: This section does not apply to the personnel acting as the Departments Public Information Officer or agency representative.

Employees may not use their City email address to register a personal account on Social Media.

Employees should refrain from using social media while on work time or on Department equipment.

Richard L. Lewis
Chief of Police