
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS POLICE

GENERAL ORDER

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SUBJECT: Social Media

REFERENCE: CALEA

CROSS REFERENCE:

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I. PURPOSE

- A. The department endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy establishes this department's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log."
- B. Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
- C. Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- D. Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.
- E. Social Media: The social interaction among people in which they create, share, or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.
- F. Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.
- G. Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.
- H. Web 2.0: The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable, user-generated content, rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.
- I. Wiki: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

III. ON-THE-JOB-USE

A. Department Authorized Social Media

1. Procedures

- a. All department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee and shall be administered by the Professional Standards Unit or as otherwise determined.
- b. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the department and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.
- c. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.
 - (1) Content is subject to public records laws. Relevant records retention schedules apply to social media content.
 - (2) Content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with open records laws and e-discovery laws and policies.
- d. Where possible, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the department.

- (1) Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, personal attacks, etc.

- (2) Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.

2. Department Use

- a. Department personnel that are authorized to represent the department via social media outlets shall do the following:
 - (1) Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department and, accordingly, shall adhere to all department standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - (2) Identify themselves as a member of the department.
 - (3) Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning pending

prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to department training, activities, or work-related assignments without express written permission.

(4) Not conduct political activities or private business.

b. The use of department computers by department personnel to access social media is prohibited without authorization.

c. Department personnel use of personally owned devices to manage the department's social media activities or in the course of official duties is prohibited.

d. Employees shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

B. Potential Uses

1. Social media is a valuable investigative tool when seeking evidence or information about

- a. missing persons;
- b. wanted persons;
- c. crimes perpetrated online (i.e., cyberbullying, cyberstalking); and
- d. photos or videos of a crime posted by a participant or observer.

2. Social media can be used for community outreach and engagement by

- a. providing crime prevention tips;
- b. sharing crime maps and data; and
- c. soliciting tips about unsolved crimes (i.e., Crimestoppers, text-a-tip).

3. Social media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to

- a. road closures,
- b. special events,
- c. weather emergencies, and
- d. missing or endangered persons.

4. Persons seeking employment and volunteer positions with the department may use the Internet to search for opportunities, and social media can be a valuable recruitment mechanism.

5. The department may use internet based content when conducting background investigations of job candidates.

IV. PERSONAL USE

A. Precautions and Prohibitions - Barring state law or binding employment contracts to the contrary, department personnel shall abide by the following when using social media.

1. Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this department for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the department.

3. Department personnel may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this department without express authorization.

3. As public employees, department personnel are cautioned that speech on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties—that is, that owes its existence to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities—is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed inappropriate by the department. Department personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and this department.

a. Therefore, adherence to General Order 1.10, Code of Ethics, is required in the personal use of social media. In particular, department personnel are prohibited from the following:

(1). Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals.

(2). Speech involving themselves or other department personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.

4. Engaging in prohibited speech noted herein, may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer's testimony in criminal proceedings. Department personnel thus sanctioned are subject to discipline up to and including termination of office.

5. Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access (i.e. criminal investigations, calls for service, etc.) as a result of their employment without written permission from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

6. For safety and security reasons, department personnel are cautioned not to disclose their employment with this department nor shall they post information pertaining to any other member of the department without their permission.

7. Department personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for

a. publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation);

- b. publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
 - c. using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or
 - d. publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
8. Department personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.
9. Department personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the department at any time without prior notice.
10. Reporting violations—Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.
- B. Employees are expected to confine their personal use of social media during the workday to their breaks and or lunches. Only personal devices may be used for social networking.