



## Policy 0013

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### **POLICY**

This policy is intended to provide guidance for all members of the Jefferson Parish Constable (JPCO1) in the professional and personal use of social media. It is NOT intended to impose a wholesale restriction on the free exchange of information or opinions, but it DOES, in some cases, extend the JPCO1's existing standards of conduct, ethics and professionalism to the domain of social media. The JPCO1 shall:

1. Recognize every member's Constitutional right to freedom of speech;
2. Recognize the significant role that social media can play in the personal lives of members;
3. Take those limited actions that may become necessary to preserve integrity as a fair and impartial law enforcement organization; and
4. Consider violations of this policy to be actions that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Departmental Spokesperson** – Any member of the JPCO1, who has been authorized by the Constable, his/her designee, or the Director, Media Relations Section (MRS), to communicate with and/or deliver information to the general public and social/news media on behalf of the JPCO1.

**Member** – For the purposes of this policy, the term “member” shall include ALL employees of the JPCO1, whether sworn, civilian or contractual.

**Post** – For the purposes of this policy, the term “post” shall be defined, in context, as either: (1) the action of submitting information to the Internet or a social media site; or (2) a collective name for all or part of any information already displayed on the Internet or a social media site.

**Social Media** – A collective term referring to the various online platforms, applications or technologies enabling the “sharing” of electronic, user-generated text, audio, photographic, video or multimedia files.

**Social Media Site** – A particular application or website that allows social networking, “blogging,” photograph or video sharing, and similar online activities. (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)

**GENERAL**

1. Do not assume any expectation of privacy when posting information to the Internet or a social media site, regardless of user privacy settings or other access controls.
2. Any information posted to a public page of a social media site may be accessed at any time, without prior warning, by JPCO1 personnel/investigators, members of the media, defense attorneys, etc.
3. Any social media activity, conducted in a manner that reveals your position as a member of the JPCO1, may be evaluated for compliance with existing departmental policies and procedures.

**REQUIRED ACTION****Members' Personal Use of Social Media****Member**

1. All members should expect any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the JPCO1 at any time without prior notice.
2. Members are personally responsible for any content they "like" or publish, forward or post to the Internet and/or a social media site.
3. No member may post, transmit or otherwise disseminate any information, videos or images, in any format, that violates Policy 0013, *Member Confidentiality Obligations and Media Releases*, which governs every JPCO1 employee's confidentiality obligations.
4. It is recommended that sworn members not disclose or allude to their status as JPCO1 members.

**NOTE:** Because of the likelihood that material posted to a social media site will be permanently archived, the disclosure of any information that identifies a member as a police officer can endanger officer safety and/or limit an officer's ability to serve in certain undercover or highly sensitive assignments.

5. Do not reveal, in any manner or for any reason, that any other member (e.g., a supervisor, partner, co-worker, etc.) is an employee of the JPCO1 without the express written consent of that other member.
6. Unless directly authorized to do so by the Police Commissioner, his/her designee, or the Director, Media Relations Section, all members are prohibited from posting or publishing to the Internet or a social media site, or "liking," any discriminatory, gratuitously violent or similarly inappropriate written content, audio files, photographs, or other depictions that are contrary to the mission and effectiveness of the JPCO1, including but not limited to:
  - 6.1. Any racist, sexist or other discriminatory content that expresses bias against any race, religion, or other protected class of individuals;
  - 6.2. Content that might lead a reasonable member of the public to question whether the member is committed to constitutional, non-discriminatory policing;

- 6.3. Content that reasonably suggests the member's approval of, or association with, an unlawful act of violence or other criminal behavior;
- 6.4. Content that reasonably could impair a member's ability to carry out essential job functions (e.g., providing sworn testimony) or impair the JPCO1's ability to carry out its law enforcement functions.
7. Unless directly authorized to do so by the Constable, his/her designee, or the Director, Media Relations Section, all members are prohibited from posting or publishing to the Internet or a social media site, photographs, cartoons or other depictions of:
  - 7.1. Any member in any partial or complete departmental uniform;
  - 7.2. Any member displaying official identification;
  - 7.3. Departmental patches, badges, seals or insignia;
  - 7.5. Marked or unmarked vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles.
8. No member may create or maintain a JPCO1 social media site, or one that may reasonably be perceived as a JPCO1 social media site, unless directly authorized to do so by the Constable.
9. Do not engage in any type of social media contact (e.g., "friending," "following," etc.) that would hamper, interfere with or otherwise prejudice an open or ongoing investigation, case, or court action.
10. Do not use a JPCO1 email address to register with or join a social media site.
11. If you reveal (intentionally or otherwise) your employment/position with the PJCO1, when posting personal comments or material on a social media site:
  - 11.1. You shall not represent yourself as a JPCO1 spokesperson; and
  - 11.2. You shall make clear that your opinions, material and/or comments are not an official statement from the JPCO1.
12. Remember that everything thing you post on social media is strictly governed by the confidentiality requirements imposed on Members by Policy 0012, *Member Confidentiality Obligations and Media Releases*.
13. Social media content, posted by the Media Relations Section, may be forwarded (e.g., "re-Tweeted", etc.) to a personal social media site(s).

#### **Professional/Official Use of Social Media**

1. Only the Constable, his/her designee, the Director, Media Relations Section, or a designated departmental spokesperson may post, comment or reply on a social media site on behalf of the Jefferson Parish Constable's Office.

2. Departmental spokespersons shall not comment on subject matters:
  - 2.1. Beyond their area of professional expertise; or
  - 2.2. On which they are not authorized to represent the JPCO1.
3. When authorized to represent the JPCO1 on a social media site:
  - 3.1. Use only an approved/official account or user name.
  - 3.2. Adhere to the "Terms of Use Agreement" that governs your activity on the site.
  - 3.3. Ensure your status as a representative of the JPCO1 is clearly evident.
  - 3.4. Limit interaction and comments to information within the public domain.
  - 3.5. Do not release any information that may in any way be considered confidential.
  - 3.6. Ensure that all content, posted to a social media site on behalf of the JPCO1, is accurate and in compliance with JPCO1 policy.

#### **Director, Media Relations Section**

1. Review and approve all activity involving the JPCO1's official Internet website(s).
2. If an official JPCO1 social media site or Internet website hosts a public discussion "forum," messaging board, or other interactive commenting feature, ensure that:
  - 2.1. A site moderation policy is clearly stated;
  - 2.2. Comments posted by the general public are monitored by a member of the Media Relations Section for inappropriate or offensive content; and
  - 2.3. Comments, deemed to be inappropriate or offensive, are removed/deleted from the site.
3. Coordinate any release of suspect, witness or person-of-interest information with the Chief, Criminal Investigation Division, or his/her designee.

#### **Criminal Investigation Division**

Consult with the Director, Media Relations Section, when there is a belief that an ongoing investigation or intelligence collection effort would benefit from the use of social media.

#### **Supervisor**

Any complaint concerning the contents of a member's social media site, Internet post(s), or similar online activity, shall be documented and investigated in the same fashion as any other complaint of misconduct or wrongdoing and in accordance with Policy 0011, *General Disciplinary Process*.

**EXCEPTIONS**

This policy does not apply to social media activities undertaken by a member of the JPCO1 in the course of a legitimate criminal investigation, or in the course of intelligence collection efforts, related to public safety or potential criminal activity. This exception shall include those occasions on which a member must create and/or use a fictitious social media account, user profile, avatar or similar form of online identification for legitimate law enforcement purposes.