
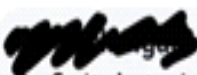




# The ACO Voice

A Monthly Magazine from the Animal Control & Care Academy  
The Only National Monthly Magazine Dedicated to Animal Control

## Post at Your Own Peril

### 1. The person who had some family tree questions:

    
 Definitely trying this! I really wanna find out if I'm related to my ancestors 🤔🤔  
 🤔  
 6w Like Reply 🤔👍👍 375

    
 I highly suspect you are indeed related to your ancestors.  
 6w Like Reply 🤔👍👍 940

 Kyle    
 Yesterday at 9:50pm 🌐   
 I need to quit smoking....how can i do that without the patches and the gum??? Help plz 😊

Like · Comment · Share

 Jamie    
 Cold turkey.  
 Like - Yesterday at 10:21pm

 Kyle    
  gross i hate turkey  
 Like - Yesterday at 10:21pm

 Jamie    
 Not what that means.  
 Like - Yesterday at 10:22pm

   
 20 minutes ago 🌐   
 dogs cant talk, so do they have brains? I mean I know they walk but it's only because we are telling them to walk?¿ 🤔 #idk

1 Like 1 Comment

👍 Like    💬 Comment    ➦ Share

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 23 mins 🌐   
 Wonder how true this is?



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# Post at Your Own Peril

By John Mays, ACCA

We all say stupid things. In addition, we all know that those remarks cannot only embarrass you; they can also possibly bring harm to you and your family. It can also get you terminated from your job.

In today's world, there is no such thing as "privacy." The constant tracking by Big Tech, home security cameras keeping an eye on "your world," and the thought that Alexa has been eavesdropping on you this whole time, should be concerning to you as a private citizen. But as an ACO, it's your social media posts that should be your utmost concern. Did you know that a Philadelphia-based organization has been quietly collecting social media posts from current and former law enforcement officers that the organization deems to be potentially "offensive"? For years, the group has collected and published social media posts from officers all over the United States. The result? Several of those agencies initiated investigations into the on-line

behavior of those officers.

The group, called the "Plain View Project," created a massive database of social media posts from thousands of officers. The database entries include the name of the officers, the posts themselves, the officers' agency, badge number, and even their salary. Via information from the organization's website:

"We present these posts and comments because we believe that they could undermine public trust and confidence in our police. In our view, people who are subject to decisions made by law enforcement may fairly question whether these on-line statements about race, religion, ethnicity and the acceptability of violent policing—among other topics—inform officers' on-the-job behaviors and choices. To be clear, our concern is not whether these posts and comments are protected by the First Amendment. Rather, we believe that because fairness,

*Continued on Page 4*

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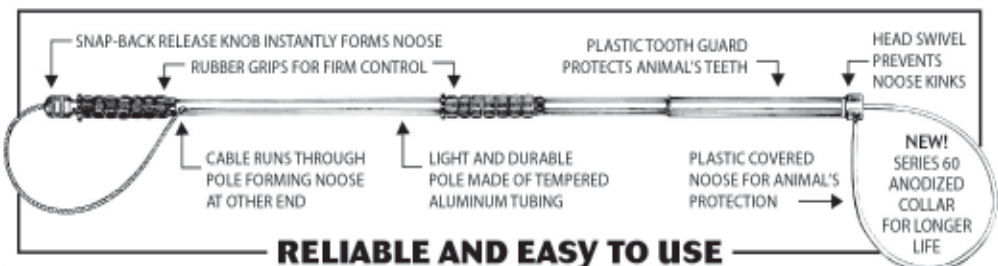
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equal treatment, and integrity are essential to the legitimacy of policing, these posts and comments should be part of a national dialogue about police.”

With the current attitudes towards law enforcement being less than positive, there are many groups of people who can and will deem your comments as hateful or offensive. Even “retweeting” a joke can be offensive to someone. As ACO’s, we possess a warped sense of humor in order to deal with stressful situations. However, no one outside the four walls of your department would ever be able to understand nor accept that warped humor (except for us fellow ACO’s, of course).

I have read several comments/posts from ACO’s to social media platforms. While I understand that we all have a First Amendment right to free speech, I wince reading some of these posts. I think that we all fail to realize that officers can be terminated for comments or photos they posted on social media away from work (or during work, for that matter). While the U.S. Constitution might guarantee your free speech, it does not necessarily guarantee you employment. Do not think for a moment that you cannot be sued for your postings. Any smart defense attorney will investigate your social media posts related to a criminal or civil case involving their client. Those photos or

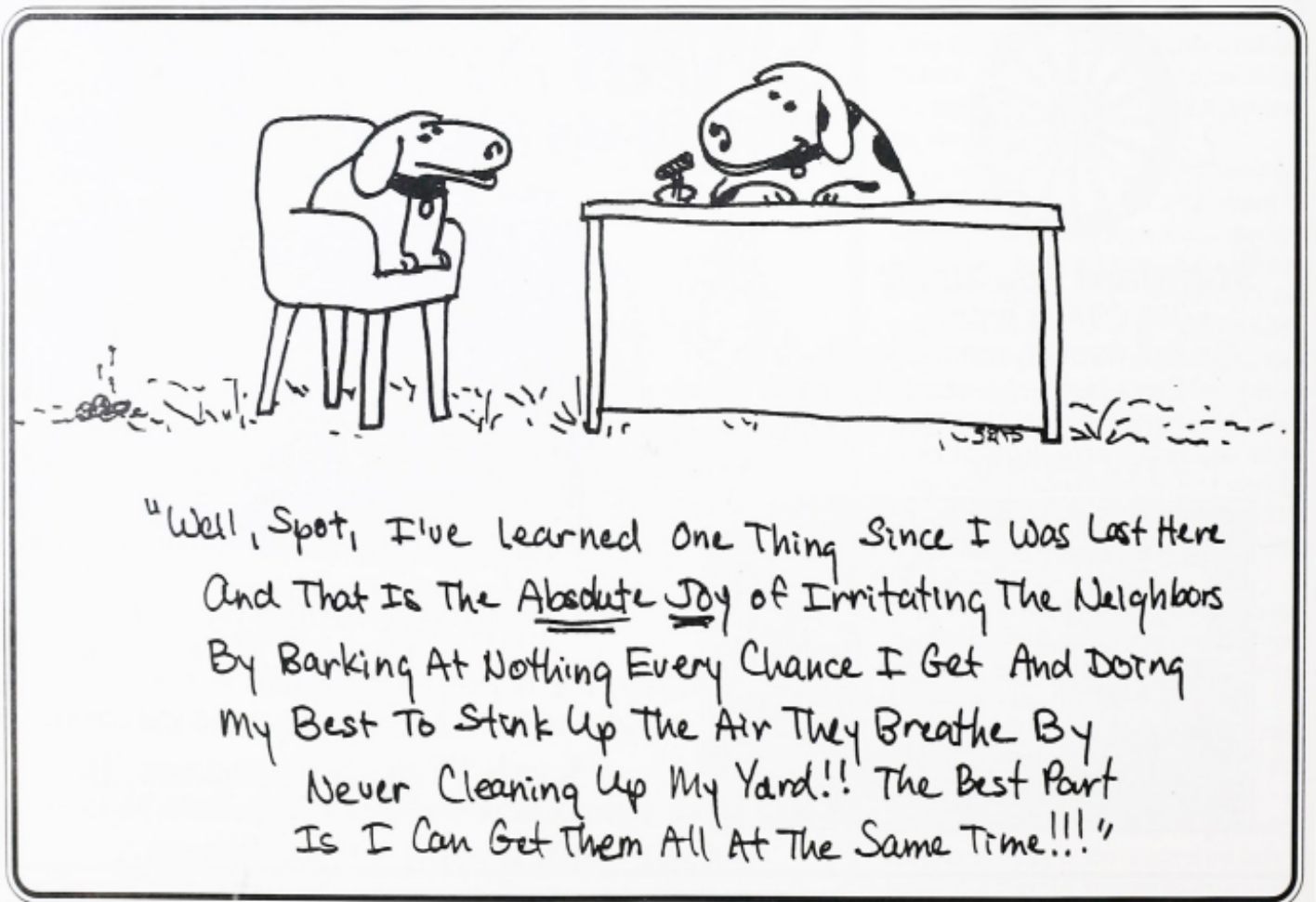
comments you posted can suddenly be turned against you, making you a party to a lawsuit.

As an employee, try to follow these tips:

- \* Familiarize yourself with your agency's social media policy.
- \* Avoid venting about work, citizens or coworkers on-line.
- \* Regularly monitor and manage your social media profile.
- \* Check your privacy settings.
- \* Consider how your on-line footprint might influence your professional reputation or future career opportunities.
- \* Consider which friend requests you accept (i.e.: Do not accept a friend request from former ACO Dennis Rader – a.k.a. BTK Killer).
- \* Be careful what you “like,” “favorite” or “retweet.” If they have a negative impact on your agency's reputation, your agency may be entitled to take action.
- \* Avoid excessive personal social media use at work.

Again, we all have a First Amendment right to free speech. However, understand that your comments may have consequences. Remember, all digital activity is

*Continued on Page 5*



public and permanent, including Facebook posts, smartphone activity and digital camera pictures, so beware what you share. Once you hit “share” or “like” or whatever else, it is now permanent and it is discoverable. Even deleted Facebook posts can be retrieved - Facebook stores all your deleted data for up to 90 days. And Twitter? As we have discovered recently with our newly elected officials, even though Twitter insists that deleted posts are no longer retained by the company, all it takes is a watchdog group or an interested citizen to get a screen grab of your deleted post.

Does your agency offer a social media policy specific to your staff? If not, I have included a few policies at the end of this issue that might assist your department into developing one of your own.

### Did You Know?

*Ten Thousand Commandments* is the Competitive Enterprise Institute’s annual survey of the size, scope, and cost of federal regulations, and how they affect American consumers, businesses, and the U.S. economy at large. Written by CEI Vice President for Policy Wayne Crews, it shines a light on the large and under-appreciated “hidden tax” of America’s regulatory state. The current edition marks 26 years since the first report was published as part of the *Journal of Regulation and Social Costs* in 1993.

Federal government spending, deficits, and the national debt are staggering, but so is the impact of federal regulations. Unfortunately, the financial impact of these rules gets little attention in policy debates because, unlike spending and taxes, they are unbudgeted and difficult to quantify.

By making Washington’s rules and mandates more comprehensible, Crews underscores the need for more review, transparency, and accountability for new and existing federal regulations.

The 2020 report urges Congress to take responsibility by reviewing, debating, and voting on the most costly regulations. Highlights from the 2020 edition include:

\* The aggregate cost of federal regulation remains more than \$1.9 TRILLION annually – and that is a conservative estimate based on publicly available data from government, academia, and industry and the inherent unknowability of such costs

\* The cost of federal regulation to each U.S. household exceeds \$14,000 annually, on average. For perspective, that equals about one-fifth (18 percent) of the average pre-tax household budget and is the second-biggest budget item after housing.



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# ACCA Training Schedule

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## **Training Course for Animal Control Professionals**

**Hosted by Jackson Animal Services**

**February 24-25, 2021 - Jackson, Tennessee**

Schedule of Training: Oleoresin Capsicum Aerosol Training (OCAT) Certification; Baton/Bitestick Certification; Lifting & Loading for Animal Control

## **Basic Animal Control Officer Certification**

**Hosted by Kane County Animal Control**

**March 1-4, 2021 - St. Charles, Illinois**

Schedule of Training: Laws and Enforcement Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

## **Baton/Bitestick Certification**

**Hosted by Kane County Animal Control**

**March 5, 2021 - St. Charles, Illinois**

Schedule of Training: Baton/Bitestick Certification

## **Field Training Officer Certification**

**Hosted by the Alabama Animal Control Association**

**March 15-16, 2021 - Mobile, Alabama**

Schedule of Training: Field Training Officer Certification

## **Basic Animal Control Officer Certification**

**Hosted by the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region**

**March 22-25, 2021 - Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Schedule of Training: Laws and Enforcement Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

## **Advanced ACO/HLEO Certification Course**

**Hosted by the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region**

**April 5-9, 2021 - Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Schedule of Training: Animal Control and the Criminal Justice System; Proactive Animal Control; Animal Attack Investigation and Reporting; Officer Safety in the Field; Animal Crime Scene Photography, Videography and Sketching; Animal Hoarding Investigations; Using Forensics in Animal Cruelty Investigations; Obtaining and Executing Search Warrants; Illegal Animal Fighting; Livestock and Exotic Animal Investigations

## **Basic Animal Control Officer Certification**

**Hosted by Burke County Animal Services**

**April 12-15, 2021 - Waynesboro, Georgia**

Schedule of Training: Laws and Enforcement Procedures; Interpersonal Communication; Officer Safety and Protection; Basic Animal Control Officer Investigations; Evidence Law and Collection; Courtroom Testimony and Report Writing; Canine Behavior and Aggressive Dogs; Safe Animal Handling/Capture and Restraint Equipment

## **Chemical Immobilization Certification**

**Hosted by Glynn County Animal Control**

**August 2, 2021 - Brunswick, Georgia**

Schedule of Training: Chemical Immobilization Certification

**TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**  
**3.11 SOCIAL MEDIA**

<b>SUBJECT: Social Media</b>		
<b>3.11</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE:</b> 5-7-2019	<i>William Cochran</i> William Cochran, Chief of Police
	<b>REVISED:</b> 4-22-2019	
	<b>TOTAL PAGES:</b> 5	
<b>CALEA:</b> 26.1.1		

**3.11.1 PURPOSE**

The Department recognizes social networking can enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline process and foster productivity. When using social media Department personnel shall be mindful their words and images become part of the worldwide electronic domain. This order describes proper use of Department media and prohibits inappropriate use of personal social media. Anticipating advances in technology and terminology, it addresses social media in general rather than any particular medium.

**3.11.2 POLICY**

The Department respects the First Amendment rights of its employees to speak as private persons on matters of public concern and recognizes those same protections afforded public employees when speech may bear negatively on themselves or their employer may be narrower than speech made by private citizens. Department personnel are free to express themselves on personal social media and otherwise except as might negatively affect Department working relationships, safety and effectiveness, duty performance, appropriate confidentiality of criminal justice information, or the professional reputation of the Department or its employees. Employees shall comply with the requirements of this Order in regard to use of both Department media and personal social media. Volunteers shall comply with all requirements of this Order as prescribed for “employees,” or “Department personnel.”

**3.11.3 SANCTIONED PRESENCE**

- A. All Department social media shall be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and shall be administered by the Public Information Officer (PIO) or Public Relations Specialist. Those designated as Social Media Team by the PIO are also permitted to post on Department social media.
  
- B. Where possible, social media page(s) should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Department.



## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.11 SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. Page(s) shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the Department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, or personal attacks; and
2. Page(s) shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.

#### **C. Department Sanctioned Use**

Personnel representing 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, nor 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 from the Chief of Police or designee; and
4. Not conduct political activities or private business.

- D. The use of Department computers by employees to access social media for personal reasons must be reasonable, limited and consistent with City of Topeka policies.

#### **3.11.4 AUTHORIZED USES**

- A. Access and use of social media may be valuable investigative tools and may be used in conformance with this order to assist with investigations and intelligence gathering, including but not necessarily limited to:

1. Missing persons;
2. Wanted persons;
3. Gang participation;
4. Criminal activity generally;
5. Crimes perpetrated online (e.g., cyber bullying, cyber stalking); and
6. Photos or videos of a crime posted by a participant/observer.

- B. Social media may also be utilized as a way of providing information to the community as a form of outreach. Examples include but are not limited to:

1. Providing crime prevention information;
2. Offering online-reporting opportunities;
3. Sharing crime maps and data;

# TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

## 3.11 SOCIAL MEDIA

4. Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes;
5. Recruitment of potential employees and volunteers;
6. Traffic related issues;
7. Special events;
8. Weather emergencies; and
9. Missing or endangered persons.

### 3.11.5 PROHIBITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- A. Employees shall not use any electronic device (e.g., cell phones, smartphones, computer, etc.), Department issued or personal, to post, upload or download any Department or job related information to any social media outlet, (personal or Department) except as approved by the Chief of Police or designee. This prohibition includes but is not limited to the following:
  1. Confidential, sensitive, information to which an employee has access due to their employment with the City, including;
    - a. Data from any ongoing criminal or administrative investigation including statements, memos, photographs, video or audio recordings;
    - b. Photographs of suspects, arrestees or evidence from any crime scene;
  2. Personal statements about criminal investigations, pending prosecutions or use of force incidents (including off-duty);
  3. Anything that would tend to discredit or reflect unfavorably upon the Department or its employees;
  4. 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; or
  5. Speech about themselves or other Department personnel describing behavior that would be reasonably regarded as reckless or irresponsible in relation to their law enforcement employment.
- B. Employees' publication of information on the internet or social media that bring discredit to the Department or to a Department employee, or promotes misconduct, whether on or off duty, is prohibited and may be investigated by the Department.
- C. Department personnel shall be aware that they may be subject to civil liability for:
  1. Publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation);
  2. Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.11 SOCIAL MEDIA**

- the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
3. Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without the person's permission for an exploitative purpose; or
  4. Publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
- E. Department employees are prohibited from posting or transmitting any pictures or videos of official Department training, activities or work-related assignments without the prior express permission of the Chief of Police or designee.
- F. Department employees shall not send, transmit or post pictures or information about undercover officers from this or any other agency.
- G. Engaging in speech that may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer's testimony in criminal proceedings.
- H. When social media is to be used as an investigative tool involving a fictitious account/identity by an employee, authorization must first be obtained from the Bureau Commander.
- I. Department employees shall be aware that all department run social networking sites will be monitored and/or may be accessed by the Department at any time without prior notice and, if found to be used inappropriately, could result in disciplinary action.
- J. 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.
- K. For safety and security reasons, Department personnel are cautioned not to disclose their employment with this Department nor shall they post information pertaining to the employment of any other member of the Department without the express permission of the involved employee. As such, Department personnel are cautioned not to do the following:
1. Display Department logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal webpages.
  2. Post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as a police officer of this Department.

#### **3.11.6 APPROVAL PROCESS**

- A. A Department employee seeking approval to use references to the Department on a personal website, web page or other public forum, shall

## **TOPEKA POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

### **3.11 SOCIAL MEDIA**

submit a request for approval to the Chief of Police or designee via the chain of command.

- B. The request shall describe specifically the proposed reference and its intended purpose.
- C. A list of the reference(s) and any media to be used shall be provided.
- D. A printed layout of the entire web page, posting or website shall be provided. When possible, each approved social media page(s) shall link to the Department's official website.
- E. The Department shall diligently attempt to provide an approval or denial of the request within seven business days.
- F. Any changes made to a previously approved posting must be submitted for reconsideration before such changes take effect.

#### **3.11.7 REPORTING VIOLATIONS**

Employees shall immediately notify their chain of command if they become aware of any posting or any website or web page that could reasonably be interpreted as a violation of this policy or of any situation where information, pictures or data representing the Department are posted to an unofficial site.



# WICHITA POLICE DEPARTMENT

## POLICY MANUAL



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### POLICY 225

### SOCIAL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

#### I. POLICY

Employees must be cognizant of inappropriate or unauthorized *internet postings* and the negative impact it has upon the City of Wichita and the Wichita Police Department. Public service agencies rely on the public's confidence and trust. Information which brings the City of Wichita or the Wichita Police Department into disrepute has a corresponding effect on reducing public confidence and trust. Employees are entitled to use personal/*social networking* web pages, sites and/or blogs while off-duty. However, it is the policy of the Wichita Police Department to maintain a level of professionalism in both on-duty and off-duty conduct and employees shall not engage in conduct that contradicts or impedes the mission or policies of the department.

#### II. PROCEDURES

##### A. General Guidelines

1. Except in the performance of authorized duty, employees shall not post, transmit, reproduce, and/or disseminate information (*digital media*) to the internet or any other forum (public or private) that would violate department policies. Information already in the public domain may be redistributed. Nothing in these guidelines will be construed to prohibit employees from *internet postings* made as an individual (not a police officer) concerning political activity or matters of general public concern.
2. Unless the employee is conducting official business related to the performance of duties approved by a supervisor, the following general guidelines apply:
  - a. Members of the department shall not use City/Department computers to access any *social networking* sites.
  - b. Members are prohibited from using department equipment and resources to access *Social Networking* sites, internet dating sites, and sites that host *weblogs*, while on duty or off duty.

##### B. Prohibited Practices

1. Members of the department are prohibited from the following, whether on or off-duty. Any *internet posting* containing the following types of information to *social networking* or websites:
  - a. *Digital media* related to any calls for service or self-initiated activity where police action is taken, whether on or off-duty, and where there is an expectation of privacy, unless said *internet postings* relate to criminal

- investigations of departmental employees;
  - b. Photographs, documents, images, video recordings, or any other depiction of badges, uniforms, equipment, apparatus or techniques used by the Wichita Police Department (Section C1b ). However, photographs, images and videos previously released to the media or posted online by the Department may be posted;
  - c. Confidential, sensitive, or copyrighted information to which you have access due to your employment with the Wichita Police Department;
  - d. Data/information from ongoing criminal or administrative investigations, except for communications among or between FOP representatives and the affected employees, which relate to the discharge of the FOP's duty of fair representation;
  - e. Photographs of suspects, arrestees, or evidence, unless the same photograph has already been disseminated by the Department or the City;
  - f. Comments related to pending prosecutions;
  - g. Official training techniques, activities, or work related assignments which could compromise ongoing police activities. Information about community events the officer is involved in may be posted with approval from the member's Bureau Commander.
2. Members of the Department shall not authorize or encourage any other party to make an *internet posting* which the member is prohibited from making.
  3. All personnel must be aware that the use of personally owned equipment to collect *digital media* is prohibited unless approval is given by a supervisor or exigent circumstances exist. If personally owned equipment is used to collect evidence the contents will be held as evidence or potential evidence.
  4. The City of Wichita's website, Wichita Police Department's website, *social media* pages, and Crime Stoppers website will be exclusively maintained and updated by the designee(s) of the Chief of Police. Any release or posting of information (*digital media*) to those sites or *pages* shall be in compliance with the release of information policy 706.

### **C. Personal Precautions**

1. For safety and security reasons, employees are cautioned not to disclose their employment with the department nor shall they post information pertaining to any other member of the department without their permission.
  - a. Posted content has the potential to be shared broadly, including with individuals whom the employee did not intend to communicate. For example, opposing counsel may subpoena posts if they are relevant to a lawsuit or case related to official duties. These posts may be used to discredit and impugn the employee's reputation or demonstrate bias.

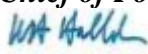
Appearing in uniform creates a link or relationship between online content and employment.

- b. Members of the Department shall not post any photographs on any *social media* forum in departmentally issued uniforms, badges, or emblems without their respective Bureau Commander's approval. However, photographs previously published online by the Department or the City may be posted by members.
2. Members of the Department shall not post content which violates [Administrative Regulations 3.2 or 3.3](#).



# COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

*“Policing Excellence through Community Partnerships”*

<b>Directive Type:</b> General Order	<b>Effective Date:</b> 08-1-2018	<b>General Order Number:</b> 01.07
<b>Subject:</b> Use of Social Media		
<b>Amends/Supersedes:</b> Special Order 2014-02	<b>Chief of Police:</b> 	
<b>Distribution:</b> All Personnel	<b>Review Date:</b> July 1	<b># of Pages:</b> 5

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The City of Columbia Police Department recognizes the importance of the internet in shaping public thinking about the department and our current, past and potential activities, employees, on-going investigations, and day-to-day operations. The City of Columbia Police Department also identifies with the importance of its employees joining in and helping shape the department’s image and the direction through interaction with social media forums. The City of Columbia Police Department is committed to supporting employee’s right to interact knowledgeably, responsibly, socially and legally on the internet through interaction in social media.

Consequently, the guidelines in this social media policy will help sworn and non-sworn employees make appropriate decisions about the work-related and the personal contents of their blogs, personal websites, and other interactive sites, to include postings on video and picture sharing sites, or in the comment sections made within the various blogs, elsewhere on the public internet, and in responding to comments from posters either publicly, via email or direct messenger.

These guidelines are intended to help employees open a respectful, knowledgeable interaction with people on the internet. They also protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of the City of Columbia Police Department and our current and potential activities, employees, investigations and daily operations.

Note that these policies and guidelines apply not only to work-related postings but will also address employee’s off-duty behavior as it relates to the City of Columbia Police Department, however, it is not meant to infringe upon employee’s personal interaction or commentary online. This policy is also not meant to address one particular form of social media; rather social media in general, as advances in technology occur and new tools emerge.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

**Social Media:** It is primarily an internet and mobile based tool for sharing and discussing information and ideas among people. Social media provides a new and potentially valuable means of assisting the City of Columbia Police Department and its personnel in meeting community problem-solving, investigative aid, collaborations in crime prevention, and other related investigative areas that will provide a means to streamline processes and advance productivity.



*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.”

*Page:* The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

*Post:* Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

*Public Concern:* Speech of such common interest to the public at large that the employee’s comments on the matter evidence an expression of an individual citizen and not by virtue of their position at the City of Columbia Police Department.

*False Statement:* A statement which is deceitful, misleading or untrue.

*Profile:* Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

*Social Networks:* Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

*Speech:* Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication

### **3.0 DIRECTIVE**

As public employees, department personnel are cautioned that speech on- or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the department. Department personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and this department.

#### **3.1 Use of the City of Columbia Police Department Social Media**

The use of all department social media sites or pages will be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and will be primarily administered and maintained by the Office of the Chief. The use of department computers by department personnel to access social media is prohibited without authorization.

The department’s social media sites or pages will indicate that they are maintained by the City of Columbia Police Department. They will have City of Columbia Police Department contact information displayed and each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the agency’s presence. It will adhere to applicable laws and regulations, including all City of Columbia Information Technology and Records Management policies. Where possible, the page(s) should link to the department’s official website.

Official department social media sites and pages shall state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the site/page do not reflect the opinions of the City of Columbia Police Department and reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks. Any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.

Personnel representing the department must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the department and shall adhere to department standards and polices. **Therefore, Employees are prohibited from:**

- Sharing information about the City of Columbia Police Department that is confidential or for law enforcement use only. This includes information about current or active investigations, department

and/or employee rumors, personal opinions or thoughts or any other information that has not been publicly released by the City of Columbia Police Department.

- Posting, transmitting, reproducing, and/or disseminating information (text, pictures, video, audio, etc.) to the internet or any other forum (public or private) that would tend to discredit or reflect unfavorably upon the CPD or any of the department's employees.
- Expressing personal opinions on any suspect or arrestee, or comment on any pending prosecution.
- Affiliating with, or advocating for, any political party or private business.
- Personal usage including, but not limited to, letters, memoranda, electronic communications such as web sites and web pages of the trademarked badge/shield, uniform patch or department name is prohibited. **All employees' photos/videos are authorized usage of the department name, badge, shield and uniform patch for official CPD business.**
- Using any electronic device (i.e. cell phones, laptops, smartphones, etc.) department issued or personal, to post, upload or download any department or job related information to any social media outlet is explicitly prohibited unless it is a site approved through the Office of the Chief of Police or designee.

These are given as examples only and do not cover the entire range of what the City of Columbia Police Department considers work sensitive and confidential. If you have any question about whether information can be released publicly or doubts of any kind, speak with your supervisor and/or the Public Information Officer before releasing information that could potentially harm the City of Columbia Police Department, or its employees, family members, witnesses, victims or suspects.

The Office of the Chief will be responsible for approving and monitoring on a regular basis all approved sites in order to ensure appropriate usage and representation of the department.

### 3.2 Use of Social Media Outlets for Investigative or Research Purposes

Social media outlets may be used by personnel for investigative or research purposes such as:

- Crime analysis and situational assessment reports;
- Criminal intelligence development; and
- Criminal investigations

Employees will only utilize social media to seek or retain information that:

- Is based upon a criminal predicate or threat to public safety; or
- Is based upon reasonable suspicion that an identifiable individual, regardless of citizenship or U.S. residency status, or organization has committed an identifiable criminal offense or is involved in or is planning criminal conduct or activity that presents a threat to any individual, the community, or the nation and the information is relevant to the criminal conduct or activity; or
- Is relevant to the investigation and prosecution of suspected criminal incidents; or
- Is useful in crime analysis or situational assessment reports for the administration of criminal justice and public safety.

Employees utilizing social media as an investigative tool will:

- Use only department electronic equipment throughout the investigation.
- Conduct an investigation only while on duty.
- Follow the guidelines previously set forth in this document.
- Only use publicly available open source material.

Employees utilizing social media as an investigative tool will not:

- Use their personal social media account, personal account information, or personal electronic devices to access the social media content.
- Use another individual's personal account without his/her consent.

Employees are reminded any personal electronic devices used on duty and/or in an official capacity may be subject to review, subpoena, discovery, public records requests, and/or seized for possible evidentiary value.

### 3.3 Personal Use: Precautions and Prohibitions

Speak respectfully about the City of Columbia Police Department and its current and potential employees, victims, witnesses, suspects and supervisors.

Do not engage in name calling or behavior that will reflect negatively on the City of Columbia Police Department's reputation.

Note that the use of copyrighted materials, unfounded, false or hurtful statements, or misrepresentation is not viewed favorably by the City of Columbia or the City of Columbia Police Department and can result in disciplinary action up to and including employment termination.

The City of Columbia Police Department encourages employees to write knowledgeably, accurately, and using appropriate professionalism. Despite disclaimers, internet interactions can result in members of the public forming opinions about the City of Columbia Police Department's employees, and/or policies.

Honor the privacy rights of department current and past employees by seeking their permission before writing about or displaying internal City of Columbia Police happenings that might be considered to be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.

In commenting in areas of private concern, Employees should be conscious not to post information or opinions which would negatively impact on any of the rights of other individuals, the City of Columbia and its employees, or litigants in any case which the City of Columbia Police Department has any interest.

Employees may comment on matters of public concern in the same manner as any citizen in the community. However, when commenting on such matters, if the Employee is commenting as a Columbia Police Officer or representative of the City of Columbia and not as a private citizen, their speech may be subject to review and potential discipline.

When using social media sites, employees should be mindful that their rhetoric becomes archived in a worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, personnel should adhere to the department's code of conduct while engaging in social media.

Employees shall not, under any circumstance, engage in prohibited speech that could potentially undermine or discredit an officer's testimony in a criminal proceeding.

Employees should recognize that they are legally liable for anything they write or present online. Personnel can be disciplined by the City of Columbia or the City of Columbia Police Department for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment. Individuals can also be sued by City of Columbia employees, and any individual or company that views employee commentaries, content, or images as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, or libelous.

Personnel should be aware that privacy and account settings are ambiguous and should never assume that personal information is protected.

Employees should be aware that all social networking sites are subject to monitoring and, if found to be used inappropriately, could result in disciplinary action.