



Ithaca Police Department

120 East Clinton Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

General Order Number: 381

IPD Social Media Usage

Issuing Authority: Chief Pete Tyler

Effective Date: 01/01/2019

Rescinds/Supersedes: All previously issued directives and section V of G.O. 380

Review Date:

Applicable NYSLEA Standards: 28.4

Number of Pages: 3

POLICY:

Social media provides a valuable means of assisting the Department and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, investigative, crime prevention, and related objectives. This policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administrative and supervisory personnel.

PURPOSE:

The Ithaca Police 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.

DEFINITIONS:

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.

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

Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook), microblogging sites (Twitter,

Nixle), photo- and videosharing sites (Flickr, YouTube, Intstagram), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).

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.

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.

Wiki: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

ON-THE-JOB USE

Department-Sanctioned Presence

- A. Determine strategy
 - 1. Where possible, each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the agency's presence on the website.
 - 2. Where possible, the page(s) should link to the Department's official website.
- B. Social media page(s) shall be designed for the target audience(s) including, but not limited to: community members, youth or potential police recruits, outside law enforcement agencies, City Government, etc.

Procedures

- A. All Department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or his designee and shall be administered by the Chief of Police's designee 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.
- D. Content is subject to public records laws.
- E. Relevant records retention schedules apply to social media content.
 - 1. Content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with open records laws and e-discovery laws and policies.
- F. Where possible, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) if authorized, do not reflect the opinions of the department.
- G. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the Department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks, and block users who

repeatedly commit this violation. All comments removed shall be captured via a screenshot and retained for future reference.

H. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.

Department-Sanctioned Use

A. Department 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 all policies and procedures, 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, opinions on fines or punishments, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to Department training, activities, or work-related assignments without express permission from the Chief of Police or his designee.
4. Not conduct political activities or private business.
5. Employees shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

Potential Uses

- A. Social media is a valuable investigative tool when seeking evidence or information about missing persons; wanted persons; gang participation; crimes perpetrated online (i.e., cyberbullying, cyberstalking); and photos or videos of a crime posted by a participant or observer.
- B. Social media can be used for community outreach and engagement by providing crime prevention tips; offering online-reporting opportunities; sharing crime maps and data; and soliciting tips about unsolved crimes (i.e., Crime-stoppers, text-a-tip).
- C. Social media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to road closures, special events, weather emergencies, and missing or endangered persons.
- D. Persons seeking employment and volunteer positions use the Internet to search for opportunities, and social media can be a valuable recruitment mechanism.
- E. This Department has an obligation to include Internet-based content when conducting background investigations of job candidates. This will include any and all social media sites.
- F. Search methods shall not involve techniques that are a violation of existing law.
- G. Every effort must be made to validate Internet-based information considered during the hiring process.