




Cocoa Beach Police Department

Standard Operating Procedure



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Subject: Social Media	Re-Evaluation: 2027	
Distribution: All Members	Related CFA Standards: 32.05	
Approving Authority: Wes Mullins Chief of Police		
Approval Date: February 4, 2025		

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide guidelines on the management, administration, and utilization of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general, as advances in technology continue and new tools emerge.

2. SCOPE

This standard operating procedure shall apply to all members of the Cocoa Beach Police Department.

3. POLICY

Social media provides a valuable means of assisting law enforcement in the areas of community outreach, problem-solving, investigations, crime prevention and other related objectives. It shall be the policy of the Cocoa Beach Police Department to identify potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon, as deemed reasonable by the Chief of Police and his designee(s). The Department endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, information exchange, streamline processes and foster productivity.

The Department respects the rights of all members to use social media as a form of self-expression. However, activities that adversely affect job performance, the performance of other members, or Department operations are unacceptable. Members must be thoughtful about how they are perceived online and that online content associated with them is consistent with standards of conduct as outlined in the Department's directives. The unauthorized or inappropriate use of social media could result in disciplinary action.

4. DEFINITION(S)

- 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. **FORUM** – an online discussion group where users can post comments and thoughts either anonymously or as themselves.
- C. **PAGE** – the specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
- D. **POST** – content shared on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- E. **PROFILE** – information that a user provides about him/herself on a social networking site.
- F. **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, micro-blogging sites, photo and video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and news sites.
- G. **SOCIAL NETWORKS** – online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

- H. SPEECH—expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words/writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

5. PROCEDURES

A. Department-Related Use, Outreach and Oversight of Social Media

1. All Department social media sites or pages shall be approved, administered, and managed by the Chief of Police or designee. (CFA 32.05A)
2. All Department social media sites or pages shall be used for valid law enforcement purposes.
3. Where possible, each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the Department's presence on the page.
4. Where possible, the page(s) should link to the Department's official website.
5. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Department and shall have Department contact information prominently displayed.
6. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
 - a. Social media content is subject to Florida public records laws and relevant record retention schedules.
 - b. Content must be managed, stored and retrieved in compliance with Florida public records laws, e-discovery laws and policies.
7. Where possible, social media pages will state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Department.
 - a. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the Department reserves the right to remove obscenities, personal attacks, and/or any other terms and conditions as may be outlined on such pages.
 - b. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure in accordance with applicable Florida Statutes.
8. Personnel representing the Department via social media outlets shall (CFA 32.05D)
 - a. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Department and, accordingly, adhere to all Department and a City standard of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - (i) Refer to [*City of Cocoa Beach, Social Media Policy*](#)
 - b. Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comment on pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs and/or videos related to Department training, activities, or work-related assignments, without prior authorization from the Chief of Police or designee.
9. Authorized users shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark and service mark restrictions when posting materials to electronic media.
10. Social media may be used for the following, but not limited to:
 - a. As an investigative tool
 - b. For community outreach and engagement including but not limited to:
 - (i) Providing crime prevention tips and public service announcements
 - (ii) Publicizing Department and City events
 - (iii) Offering on-line-reporting opportunities
 - (iv) Sharing crime maps and data
 - (v) Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes
 - c. Making time-sensitive notifications related to:
 - (i) Police activity
 - (ii) Safety concerns

- (iii) Road closures
 - (iv) Special events
 - (v) Weather emergencies
 - (vi) Missing or endangered persons
- B. On-Duty Use (CFA 32.05BC)
 - 1. Members shall not use any City equipment or resources to engage in social media activities, unless authorized by the Chief of Police or designee and in the discharge of official duties.
 - 2. The use of personal sites and devices shall be in accordance with the [*City of Cocoa Beach Employee Guide-Internet Usage; Personal Cell Phones*](#)

6. APPENDIX

- A. [City of Cocoa Beach Employee Guide](#)