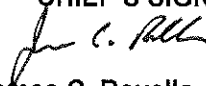
	<b>HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT</b> <b>POLICY AND PROCEDURE</b> <b>GENERAL ORDER</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> February 28, 2014	<b>ORDER NUMBER:</b> 3-01a
		<b>ISSUANCE DATE:</b> February 28, 2014	<b>PAGE:</b> 1 of 6
Use of Social Media by Department Personnel		<b>REFERENCE:</b> Hartford Police Training Bulletin 2010-8: Police and Social Networking	<b>RESCINDS:</b> N/A
		<b>CHIEF'S SIGNATURE</b>  <b>James C. Rovella, Chief of Police</b>	

**I. Policy:**

It is the policy of the Hartford Police Department to respect the rights of its employees to exercise their constitutionally protected freedom of speech. Furthermore, the Hartford Police Department believes that all employees are representatives of the Department and, as such, employees shall not utilize social media in a manner which would be detrimental to the operation or reputation of the department, its law enforcement function, or its relationship with the community it serves.

**II. Purpose:**

To protect the integrity of active criminal investigations, Hartford Police Department property, its reputation, its image and its employees from the potential negative effects and consequences of utilizing social media in an inappropriate manner.

**III. Definitions:**

Social Media - any electronic or computerized "on-line" format or platform that focuses on social networks or relationships among people and provide a means for users to interact over the internet. Examples include, but are not limited to: emails, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, message boards, blogs and bulletin boards.

**IV. Procedures:**

**A. Personal Use of 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 confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Department.
2. As public employees, Department personnel are cautioned that speech, on or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties – that is, speech which 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 detrimental to the Department. Department personnel



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should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and this Department.

3. Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information which they have access to as a result of their employment without written permission from the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
4. 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. As such, Department personnel are prohibited from the following:
  - Displaying Department logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages.
  - Posting personal photographs or providing similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as a police officer of this Department. Officers who are, or who may reasonably be expected to work in undercover operations, shall not post any form of visual or personal identification.
5. Employees should be aware that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy when engaging in social networking online. As such, the content of social networking websites may be obtained for use in criminal trials, civil proceedings, and departmental investigations. Such content may have a detrimental impact on criminal investigations or judicial proceedings.
6. When using social media, Department personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the Department's Code of Conduct is required in the personal use of social media. In particular, Department personnel are prohibited from the following:
  - 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.
  - Speech involving themselves or other Department personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.
  - Speech which publicly reveals confidential department material, be it personnel information and/or information regarding police activity or investigations.
7. 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 as outlined by the Code of Conduct.

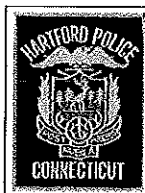


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8. Department personnel may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this Department without express authorization of the Chief of Police or his designee.
9. Department personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for:
  - Publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation).
  - 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.
  - Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose.
  - Publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Except in the authorized performance of duty, employees may not use Department computers, tablets, cell phones, or other devices to access social networking sites, blogs, bulletin boards, or similar media.
14. Except in the authorized performance of duty, employees may not utilize personal computers, tablets, cell phones, or other devices to access social networking sites, blogs, bulletin boards, or similar media **while on duty**.
15. Except in the authorized performance of duty, employees shall not post, transmit, reproduce, and/or disseminate information (texts, pictures, video, audio, etc) to the internet or any other forum (public or private) that would tend to discredit or reflect unfavorably upon the Department or any of the Department's employees.



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16. Employees having personal web pages or other types of internet postings which can be accessed by the public, shall not place, or allow to be placed, photographs or depictions of themselves dressed in uniform and/or displaying official identification, patches or badges, or in any way, either directly or indirectly, identify themselves as an employee of the department for any reason, without approval as indicated in this policy.
17. Employees having personal web pages shall not use their rank, title, or position in a manner that would suggest that they are representing the interests or official position of the Police Department.
18. Photographs of the inside of the police building as well as any photographs or videos depicting crime or accident scenes, suspects/defendants, victims, evidence items, department vehicles or property shall not be posted without consent of the Chief of Police.
19. When engaging in the personal use of social media, employees shall not post any text, photograph, audio, video, illustration, or any other multimedia file related to or depicting any of the following:
  - Current, past, or pending departmental investigation.
  - Criminal or civil proceeding pertaining to, or arising from, any matter involving the department, including allegations of misconduct.
  - Brandishing any weaponry, Department-issued or privately owned, actual or simulated, or any contraband whether actual or simulated, in a reckless or inappropriate manner.
  - Brandishing any tactical instrument, whether Department-issued or privately owned, including, but not limited to: ASP, baton, OC spray, electrical control weapon, and/or mechanical restraints.
20. Posting the following types of criminal justice information to social networking sites is explicitly prohibited:
  - Confidential, sensitive, or copyrighted information to which you have access due to your employment with the City;
  - Data from an ongoing criminal or administrative investigation including photographs, videos, or audio recordings;
  - Photographs of suspects, arrestees or evidence;
  - Personal statements about an on-duty use of force incident; and/or
  - Comments related to pending prosecutions.



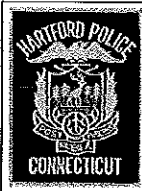
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**B. Department-Sanctioned Use of Social Media:**

1. All Department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
2. When representing the Department via social media outlets:
  - Employees shall 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.
  - Employees shall identify themselves as a member of the Department unless law-enforcement purposes dictate otherwise.
  - Employees shall 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.
  - Employees shall not conduct political activities or private business.
  - Employees shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.
3. Each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the Department's presence on the website, and should be designed for the target audience(s) such as youth or potential police recruits.
4. Where applicable, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Department.
5. 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.
6. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
7. Social media pages shall have Department contact information prominently displayed.
8. Social media content shall adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Content may be subject to public records laws and relevant records retention schedules can apply to social media content. Content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with public records laws.



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**C. Recognized Uses for a Department-Sanctioned Social Media:**

1. 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)
  - Photos or videos of a crime posted by a participant or observer.
2. Social media can be used for community outreach and engagement by:
  - Providing crime prevention tips
  - Offering online reporting opportunities
  - Sharing crime maps and data
  - Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes
3. Social media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to:
  - Road closures
  - Special events
  - Weather emergencies
  - Missing or endangered persons

**D. Approval Process:**

1. An employee seeking approval to use references to the Hartford Police Department on a personal website, web page, or other public forum shall submit a request for approval to the Chief of Police via the chain of command.
2. Employees who post photos, comments, or other material pertaining to other department employees must inform and seek approval from the employee(s) before posting same.

The Hartford Police Department reserves the right to access, audit and disclose for whatever reason all content, messages, photographs, videos and any other information created, transmitted or received via the use of any equipment issued or maintained by the Department. This includes but is not limited to records of all key strokes or web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network.