



GENERAL ORDER

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Chapter: Administration	Section: 207	
Subject: Social Media	Topic: Personal Use of Social Media	
Accreditation:	Revised:	Reaffirmed:
Enacted: 07/30/2015	Last Review: 10/01/2019	Review: 10/01/2020

I. PURPOSE

The agency recognizes the role that social media now plays in the personal lives of employees and the communities in which they live. The personal use of social media can result in consequences for agency members in their official capacities. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as certain prohibitions on the use of social media by agency members.

II. POLICY

Agency personnel are free to express themselves on social media sites as long as their posts do not compromise confidential work relationships, job performance or duties, disrupt discipline among coworkers or negatively affect the public perception of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office or any other organization. This includes inappropriate postings made under aliases or pseudonyms. Personnel should assume that their activity on social media sites may reflect upon this agency and the Sheriff.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Social Media: A category of internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social network sites, microblogging sites, photo and video sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and news sites.
- B. Blog: An internet-based self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic or topics that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log."
- 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 an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- E. Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Agency personnel shall not post, transmit, or disseminate information (including photographs taken while on duty) to which they have access as a result of their employment without written consent from the Sheriff or his/her designee.
- B. When using social media sites, personnel should be mindful that their actions become archived in a worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, personnel should adhere to the agency's code of conduct while engaging in social media.
- C. Personnel should not engage in speech or activities that could potentially undermine or discredit an employee's testimony in criminal proceedings.
- D. Agency employees should not release information gained from their positions, make statements, speeches, or publish materials that could potentially be viewed as the official position of this agency unless authorized by the Sheriff or his/her designee.
- E. Personnel may not download, use, disseminate, publish or copy the seal, markings, logo or badge of the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office on any media site for personal use without written permission from the Sheriff or his/her designee.
- F. Posting the following types of law enforcement information to social networking sites is strictly prohibited:
 - 1. Confidential, sensitive, or copyrighted information to which you have access as the result of your employment with the Loudoun County Sheriff
 - 2. Any information from a criminal or administrative investigation, including but not limited to photographs, videos, or audio recordings
 - 3. Photographs of suspects, arrestees or evidence
 - 4. Personal statements or comments about any investigation or prosecution