



**Chapter:** Records, Freedom of Information, and Transparency  
**Subject:** 14-20 – Web and Social Media Policy  
**Effective:** April 29, 2024  
**Supersedes:** Official Order 14-20, dated April 19, 2022  
**Distribution:** Department Members

---

**PURPOSE:** This Order outlines department policy concerning the creation or use of websites and social media by members in an effort to set clear expectations for the conduct of members using websites and social media, identify how communications on websites and social media relate to other policies as set forth in written directives, and to provide the grounds for member discipline based on the inappropriate use of websites and social media.

#### 14-20-1 DEFINITIONS

- A. Internet: A system which connects computers around the world using Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) to facilitate data transmission and exchange between billions of interconnected web pages collectively known as the World Wide Web (Web).
- B. Social Media: Those forms of electronic communication using websites, applications, and services on the Internet for social networking.
- C. Social Networking: The use of websites, services, and applications on the Internet to facilitate user collaboration and dissemination of information including:
  - (1) Social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, and X, formerly known as Twitter.
  - (2) Video, podcasts, and photo-sharing websites and applications such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Snapfish.
  - (3) Blogs, micro-blogging, wikis, comments sections of news outlet websites, and other public forums.
  - (4) Any other form of social media that may be developed or emerge in the future that facilitates the collaboration and dissemination of information via the Internet.
- D. Posting: The sharing of any information via the Internet through the use of any social media or during the course of any social networking and includes the sharing of written statements, video files, audio files, photographs, links to another posting, or any other communication regardless of format such as:
  - (1) Social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, and X.

- (2) Video, podcasts, and photo-sharing websites and applications such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Snapfish.
- (3) Blogs, micro-blogging, wikis, comments sections of news outlet websites, and other public forums.
- (4) Any other form of social media that may be developed or emerge in the future that facilitates the collaboration and dissemination of information via the Internet.

#### **14-20-2 POLICY**

- A. The use of personal social media or social networking sites on duty is strictly prohibited. Members needing to utilize social media or social networking sites for duty purposes must receive departmental approval by completing an Internet Access Exemption Request (DTMB-0099) form.
- B. Department members are reminded that their conduct while engaging in either professional or personal use of social media or social networking sites is subject to all other department rules and regulations including the Code of Conduct, Official Order 02-02 – Department Philosophy, Official Order 02-30 – Discriminatory Harassment, and Official Order 17-07 – Information Technology Security. As a result, members are prohibited from the following:
  - (1) Posting any material or information that demonstrates or infers obscene, immoral, or sexually explicit conduct or language while on duty, or which is done in association with or in the presence of any photographs or other depictions of any department uniforms, badges, patches, logos, shields, or marked vehicles or equipment.
  - (2) Posting any material that demonstrates a failure by a member to maintain a level of conduct in their personal and business affairs which is in keeping with the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. Members are reminded of their responsibility to conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in a manner that will reflect favorably upon the department. Members shall avoid conduct unbecoming of a member which brings the department into disrepute or reflects discredit on the individual as a member of the department or that which impairs the efficiency of the department.
  - (3) Posting any statements, on or off duty, which show a reckless disregard for the truth.
  - (4) Posting images, acts, or statements that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, religion, or protected class of individuals identified in Official Order 02-30 – Discriminatory Harassment.
  - (5) Posting information gained by reason of their authority.
  - (6) Posting statements, speeches, appearances, endorsements, or materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of the department without express authorization.
  - (7) Posting photographs or videos of official department training, activities, or work-related assignments.
  - (8) Posting any trademarked or copyrighted materials contrary to law.
- C. This section does not apply to members who are re-posting or sharing news articles or information from the department's website or social networking sites, or to the posting or re-posting of photographs or videos of official department training, activities, or work-related assignments not otherwise prohibited or deemed detrimental to the department, provided such postings do not interfere with satisfactory job performance.

- D. Department members are reminded that they have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality with regard to any communications, posting, social networking, or use of social media on any department owned electronic devices or resources and the department reserves the right to monitor and log all network and system activity with or without notice.
- E. Members are reminded that violations of this social media policy, as with violations of any other departmental order, rule, policy, regulation or criminal law, shall result in discipline up to and including discharge.
- F. Members are reminded that the failure to report violations of this social media policy by other members which they observe, or which have been reported to them, or which they have knowledge, shall result in discipline up to and including discharge in the same manner as the failure to report other prohibited activities by another member.
- G. All members shall treat as confidential the official business of the department.
- H. Members who become aware that an Internet news article or other posting contains factual errors shall notify their worksite commander. Only the worksite commander, in consultation with the Communications and Outreach Division, may post information in order to correct the record concerning misreported facts.

DIRECTOR

---

**Annual Review Responsibility:** Communications and Outreach Division  
**Accreditation Standards:** CALEA 54.1.1 G