

**PORTSMOUTH, NH POLICE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE****T-406  
DEPARTMENT SOCIAL MEDIA****EFFECTIVE DATE: 01-13-20****REMARKS:****REVISIONS:****I. INTRODUCTION**

The Portsmouth Police Department endorses the secure use of social media to better enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange, streamline processes and foster productivity. This policy establishes the agencies position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on management, content and oversight. This policy is not meant to address any one particular form of social media; rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

**II. PURPOSE**

This policy is intended to guide employee conduct as it relates to their representations of the department through numerous social networking venues. The purpose of this policy is to establish written guidelines concerning these venues and to ensure employees use appropriate discretion in the use thereof, so as not to discredit or disrespect the City of Portsmouth or the Portsmouth Police Department.

**III. POLICY**

Social media provides a new and potentially valuable means of assisting the Portsmouth Police 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.

**IV. PROCEDURES**

- A. 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 and provide a link to the department's official site.
- B. All department social media pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and shall be administered only by authorized users as determined by the Chief of Police or designee.
- C. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Portsmouth Police Department and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.

- D. All social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies including all Informational Technology and records management policies.
- E. All content is subject to New Hampshire Right to Know and public records laws.
- F. Department social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not necessarily 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.
- H. Department personnel representing the department via social media outlets shall adhere to the following.
  - 1. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department and shall adhere to all department standards of conduct and decorum.
  - 2. Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning pending prosecutions or active investigations. Not post, transmit or otherwise disseminate information that is confidential in nature.
  - 3. Not conduct political activities or private business.
  - 4. Employees shall observe and abide by all copyright or trademark restrictions in posting material to department social media.

I. Uses for Department Social Media

Social media platforms can cover a wide-array of topics from recruitment to community policing to emergency notifications. Below is an example of topics and content that may be posted to department social media. This list is not all-inclusive, however covers the most commonly used topics.

- 1. Information relative to wanted persons or persons of interest in criminal activity. This may include images, photographs or videos of suspects and or wanted persons.
- 2. Crime notices or bulletins relative to specific instances of crime. For example, rash of car thefts or scam notices.
- 3. Notice of department community policing initiatives or events.
- 4. Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes.
- 5. Advertising notices of employment opportunities for both sworn and civilian positions.
- 6. Road closures, special events, emergency notifications.

7. Missing or endangered persons.
8. Photographs or videos of department members engaged in community policing initiatives or activities.

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Robert M. Merner, Chief of Police

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