


Department of Public Safety Policies and Procedures

<u>Title</u> Social Media Policy	<u>SOP Number</u> 12.3.600
Approval Signature 	
James L. Whalen	
Reviewed/Revised by	Pages 3
Last Revision Date October 22, 2021	Effective Date March 20, 2020

Social Media Policy

- I. **Purpose:** This policy provides University of Cincinnati Department of Public Safety (UCPS) employees with guidance regarding the use of social media.
- II. **Policy:** The Social Media Policy has been established to provide guidelines and restrictions regarding UCPS's use of social media and its employees' personal use of social media. It is the policy of the UCPS to utilize social media in a thoughtful and targeted manner to further UCPS'S communication, community outreach, and crime prevention goals. In addition, UCPS recognizes and respects the rights of its employees to participate on social media platforms in accordance with this policy.

III. **Definitions:**

Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed. Pages are managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

Post: Content that an individual shares or publishes on social media.

Social media: Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

IV. **Procedure:**

A. Content:

1. UCPS may utilize social media in a variety of ways, such as:
 - a. An investigative tool when seeking evidence or information;
 - b. For community outreach and engagement;
 - c. Making time-sensitive notifications;
 - d. Being the source of information immediately following a critical incident, dispelling rumors and correcting misinformation, and magnifying UCPS's message and instructions; and
 - e. As a recruitment mechanism for employment and volunteer positions.
2. Generally, social media posts will be limited to information relevant to the University of Cincinnati community. UCPS's social media posts will not include:
 - a. Statements about the guilt or innocence of a suspect or arrestee;
 - b. Comments concerning pending prosecutions;
 - c. Confidential information; or
 - d. Information related to UCPS training, activities, or work-related assignments.

B. Administration

1. All UCPS social media content must be preapproved by the Department of Public Safety Public Information Officer. UCPS will train employees responsible for posting social media content on its policies and guidelines, media relations, and use of relevant social media applications. Each UCPS-sponsored social media page will include the following:

Social Media Policy

- a. An indication that the page is maintained and operated by UCPS;
 - b. A disclaimer notice stating the page is not monitored at all times;
 - c. A disclaimer notice that opinions expressed by visitors to the social media page do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UCPS;
 - d. Emergency and general contact information for UCPS; and
 - e. A link to UCPS's official website.
2. UCPS is permitted to disable the comment feature on its social media pages. However, if the comment feature is active, employees administering UCPS's social media pages are prohibited from deleting comments posted by third-parties and from blocking third-party users.
- C. Personal Use of Social Media
1. UCPS employees have the right to express themselves as private individuals speaking on matters of public concern on social media, unless the speech is outweighed by UCPS's interests, such as the speech:
 - a. Interferes with the operation of UCPS;
 - b. Interferes with the maintenance of discipline by supervisors;
 - c. Impairs working relationships of UCPS that are based on loyalty and confidentiality;
 - d. Obstructs performance of duties; or
 - e. Advocating or encouraging illegal conduct.
 2. These rights may also be limited when such speech is not a matter of public concern and violates the Employee Conduct and Discipline Policy (4.1.101) or any other UCPS or UC policy.
 3. Speech made by employees pursuant to their official duties is not protected speech and may form the basis for discipline.
 4. Unless having received written approval from the Director of Public Safety or Chief of Police, employees are prohibited from posting on social media any content including material, photographs, images, recordings, etc. that could reasonably be interpreted as expressing the opinion of UCPS.
 5. Use of images or other depictions of UCPS uniforms, badges, patches, logos, or marked vehicles that reflects negatively on the agency are prohibited.
 6. Employees should be aware that posts made on social media may form the basis for undermining or impeaching their testimony in criminal proceedings.