

PENNS GROVE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Standard Operating Procedure

S.O.P. # 150.6A

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SUBJECT: Police Department Social Media Operation

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BY THE ORDER OF:

Patrick J. Riley Sr., Chief

SUPERSEDES ORDER

PURPOSE

The Penns Grove Police Department has a business need to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media channels. The use of social media presents opportunity and risk to the Police Department. In general, the Police Department supports the use of social media to further the Police Department missions and goals. The Police Department endorses the secure use of social media technology to enhance communication, collaboration and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity improvements. However, their application must not compromise data confidentiality and integrity. The same standards of conduct, principles and guidelines that apply to Police Department employees in the performance of their assigned duties apply to employee social media technology use. This document establishes social media use policies, protocols and procedures intended to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology where possible.

The Police Department has a compelling interest in what is presented on behalf of the Department's social media sites. This policy sets forth guidelines for the use of all social media sites by the Police Department to convey or disseminate Police related information to its residents, employees and visitors.

POLICY: While employees have a right to maintain personal web pages and websites, their status as members of the Penns Grove Police Department requires that the content of those web pages and websites not be in violation of existing agency rules, regulations, policy, procedures, directives or create a potential conflict of interest. The Penns Grove Police Department reserves the right to restrict an employee's involvement in electronic social networking sites for the good of the agency.

I-DEFINITIONS

"Social media" includes the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. Through social media, individuals or groups can create, organize, edit or comment on, combine, and share content. Social media uses many technologies and forms, including social-networking, blogs, wikis, photo—sharing, video—sharing, podcast, social bookmarking, mash-ups, widgets, virtual worlds, microblogs, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) and more. In addition, social media shall include but not be limited to Facebook, blogs, MySpace, RSS, You Tube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, Flickr, Google Plus, Instagram, Pinterest, websites, discussion blogs and forums, XING, Digg and Reddit and shall extend to and include all future forms of social media.

2-SCOPE

This policy shall apply to members of the Police department acting in their capacity as members of the Police Department. This policy does not apply to individuals who post as individuals and not in their capacity as a member of the Police Department.

3-GENERAL POLICY

Any Police Department employee that receives permission from the Police Administration (Chief or Lieutenant) to use social media in their capacity as a member of the Police Department shall clearly state that it is authorized to do so by the Police Department and that it follows this Social Media Policy.

Social media shall be used solely to convey information about the entity posting it. No personal information or personal opinions shall be posted by the entity, employee or volunteer.

The Police Department shall designate a member(s) of the Police Department to post and monitor all social media posted on behalf of the Police Department. Only the person(s) so designated shall have the authority to make social media postings on behalf of the Police Department.

This Social Media Policy shall be posted on the official Borough website.

The Police Department shall not use social media to make any official communications to the public other than those specifically referencing the activities of the Police Department. Accuracy of information is of vital importance and must be a priority when posting.

The use of social media by the Police Department may be monitored by Police Administration or other individuals so designated by the Police Administration to insure adherence to both this Social Media Policy and the interests and goals of the Penns Grove Police Department.

The Police Department has the right to and will restrict or remove any content that it deems in violation of this Social Media Policy, any applicable law or for any other reason it deems appropriate.

All Police Department employees using social media sites on behalf of the Police Department are subject to all applicable Federal and New Jersey laws and regulations as well as applicable record retention requirements.

All Police Department members representing the Police Department on social media sites shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of Police Department and in accordance with all of its policies.

All postings should be spelled correctly and use good grammar.

Any social media sites used on behalf of the Police Department, remains the property of the Borough of Penns Grove, including all of the followers and friends generated by the site and may be deleted by the Police Administration if it deems it appropriate to do so.

All site names, passwords and/or access codes or information or changes to a site used on behalf of the Police Department shall be filed with the Police Administration and updated within two days of any change.

If a Police Department employee who has access to the social media site leaves the department, the passwords and/or access codes to the site shall be changed and the new information filed with the Police Administration within two days of the date of separation with the employee.

Police Department social media sites shall be created and maintained with identifiable characteristics of an official Police Department site that distinguishes them from nonprofessional or personal uses.

Police social media network accounts shall be created using an official department email account.

Contact information should display an official department email address, include something about being the "official account", and provide a link to the Borough or department website.

The name "Penns Grove Police Department" or the official department logo must be displayed.

4-COMMENT POLICY

1. All comments, articles and the like posted on social media by the Police Department and their members must be civil and unbiased.
2. The following are prohibited and postings containing any of the following are subject to removal by the site Administrator:
 - a. Profane, obscene, violent, sexually suggestive or pornographic content and/or language or links to such materials.
 - b. Images or links containing minors or suspected minors in sexual and/or provocative situations. These will be reported to law enforcement.
 - c. Photographs or images of children without permission of their parents or guardians.
 - d. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability or the receipt of public assistance.
 - e. Defamatory, racist and anti-Semitic remarks.
 - f. Threats to any person or organization.
 - g. Solicitation of commerce including, but not limited to, advertising of any business or product for sale with the exception of Police Department-sponsored events and/or items.
 - h. Solicitation of political support or political contributions.
 - i. Conduct in violation of any federal, state or local law or ordinance.
 - j. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
 - j. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright or other infringement on intellectual property rights.
 - k. Private contact information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses.
 - l. Personal information about a person without that person's permission.
 - m. Spamming or repetitive content.
 - n. Comments from and participation of children under 18 in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.
3. A comment posted by a member of the public on any Police Department social media site is the opinion of the commenter or poster only and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of or agreement by the Police Department nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Police Department. Such a comment may be removed, however, if the Police Department deems it appropriate to do so.

4. Any attempt to hack or otherwise compromise the Police Department's Internet or social media sites will be reported to law enforcement and the perpetrators will be denied access to the sites.
5. The Police Department reserves the right to deny access to any social media sites used by Police Department to any individual who violates the department's Social Media Policy at any time and without prior notice.
6. The Police Department shall monitor the comments on their social media sites for violations of this policy.
7. In the event a Police Department employee responds to a comment, the employee's name and title shall be included in the response.
8. No Police Department employee shall share personal information about himself/herself or other department employees.
9. All Police Department policies are applicable to interactions and postings on social media sites when acting in an official capacity and representing the Borough.

5-BREACH OF POLICY

Internet postings on the Police Department's social media sites that are deemed to constitute a breach of this Policy as determined by the Police Administration shall be removed subject to applicable archiving and retention requirements. If a social media site is frequently in violation of this Policy, it shall be permanently deleted.

Any member found by the Police Department having violated any aspect of this Policy shall be banned from having a presence on social media on behalf of the Police Department for a period of time deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police and may be subject to departmental charges.

Any illegal activity shall be reported to the appropriate authorities.