



Helen Police Department

Standard Operating Policies and Procedures

Chapter A-021 Social Media	Effective Date:	August 1, 2022	# of Pages:	3
	Revised Date:		Distribution Authorization:	<i>Alonna C. Barrett</i>
	Special Instructions:			

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to direct the employees of this agency with respect to the use of internet, the world wide web and social networking as a medium of communication impacting this department.

II. POLICY

The internet, blogs, twitter, the worldwide web and social networking sites and any other medium of electronic communication shall not be used in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.

It is essential for every employee of this agency to recognize that any law enforcement agency relies upon the public's confidence and trust in the individual officers and this agency to carry out the law enforcement function. Therefore, any matter which brings individual employees or the agency into disrepute has the corresponding effect of reducing public confidence and trust in our agency, thus, impeding our ability to work with and serve the public. Professionalism is the most significant factor in high level performance which in turn builds the public confidence and trust. While employees have the right to use personal/social networking pages or site, as employees of this agency, they are public servants who are held to a higher standard than the general public with regards to standards of conduct and ethics. As such the policy of this agency is to maintain a level of professionalism in both on-duty and off-duty conduct that fulfills the mission of our agency. Any publication, through any medium which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale or efficiency of this agency will be deemed a violation of this policy.

III. Procedure

- A. Employees of this agency are prohibited from using agency computers for any unauthorized purpose including surfing the internet or participating in social networking sites. This section shall not be construed to prohibit employees from accessing the world wide web for purposes such as: Map services to assist in accident documentation, phone number lookups or other job-related activities that utilize the internet.

- B. Employees of this agency are prohibited from posting or in any other way broadcasting, without prior agency approval, information on the internet or other medium of communication the business of this agency to include, but not limited to;
 - 1. Photographs/images relating to any investigation of this agency
 - 2. Video or audio files related to any investigation of this agency
 - 3. Video, audio, photographs or any other media which memorialize a law enforcement related action of this agency.
 - 4. Logos/Uniforms/Badges or other items which are symbols associated with this agency
 - 5. Any other material or item which is identifiable to this agency

- C. Employees of this agency who utilize social networking sites, blogs, twitter or other mediums of electronic communication in their off-duty time shall maintain an appropriate level of professionalism and appropriate conduct so as not to broadcast in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.

- D. Employees shall not use references in these social networking sites or other mediums of communication that in any way represent themselves as an employee of this agency without prior agency approval. This shall include but not be limited to;

1. Employees shall not use social networking sites or other mediums of internet communication to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature.
2. Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of internet communication to post any materials which promote violence or weaponry.
3. Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of internet communication to post or broadcast any materials which could be detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.
4. Employees of this agency are prohibited from using their title as well as any reference to this agency in any correspondence to include emails, postings, blogs, twitter or social networking sites unless the communication is of an official nature and is serving the mission of this agency. This prohibition also includes signature lines in personal email accounts. An employee may seek agency approval for such use.
5. New Employees: All candidates seeking employment with this agency shall be required to complete an affidavit indicating their participation in any social networking sites. This affidavit shall include the names of the sites. The candidate shall provide the agency with access to their site as part of any background examination.
6. Administrative Investigations: Employees who are subject to administrative investigations may be ordered to provide the agency with access to a social networking site when the subject of the investigation is directly, narrowly and specifically related to the employee's performance or ability to perform his or her function within the agency or when the subject of the investigation is potentially adverse to the operation, morale or efficiency of the agency.