



# UW-Madison Police Department

**Policy: 54.2**

**SUBJECT: SOCIAL NETWORKING**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/31/11**

**REVISED DATE: 10/01/17**

**REVIEWED DATE: 09/30/15; 08/21/18**

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## **POLICY:**

The University of Wisconsin–Madison Police Department shall establish policies and procedures for personal Internet conduct. These policies and procedures shall relate to posting information on the Internet or disseminating information electronically regarding or affecting the Department. No employee shall allow or permit digital media to be posted to the Internet that reasonably appears to communicate the opinions or views of the Department.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

“Social media” refers to an electronic means for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **54.2.1 PERSONAL ONLINE INTERNET CONTENT**

The following procedures shall guide Department members as they participate in social media-related activities:

- A. No member of the Department shall allow or permit any digital media to be posted to the internet that
  1. Could reasonably be interpreted as expressing the opinions of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Police Department. A member may comment on a subject of general interest and of value and concern to the public provided that in doing so the member does not suggest or imply the views expressed are those of the Department.
  2. Has both a reference of the member being affiliated with the Department and contains content that is unprofessional, unbecoming or illegal, such as lewd sexual conduct, excessive alcohol consumption or similar behaviors. Courts may scrutinize the credibility of a witness from unintentional sources including the Internet.
  3. May reasonably have an adverse effect on agency morale, discipline, operation of the agency, safety of staff or perception of the public.
  4. Contains any recording obtained while in the performance of enforcement activities, tactical situations, or anything that will have an adverse effect upon the agency. Digital images of training or presentations that contain no tactical information, promotions, ceremonies, and images of similar situations are permissible.
- B. Clarification on appropriate postings, if needed, shall be directed to Public Information Officer.

### **54.2.2 DEPARTMENT SOCIAL NETWORKING ACCOUNTS**

The Department will seek to expand public safety education enabling members of the University community to make safe choices for themselves, fellow students and staff members. The following outlines Department efforts to share information in a social networking format:

- A. The Department shall maintain one Facebook and Twitter account. The intent is to join and use social networks already proven to be a value to the University community. Use of other sites must be approved by the Department P.I.O. and the Chief of Police or designee.
- B. The Department P.I.O. manages all department social media accounts. Those designated to author and communicate on behalf of the Department include the Department P.I.O. or designee, in their absence, members of the management team, the Day Shift Patrol Sergeant, and designated public information officers. Others may be authorized by management team personnel to post specific information on particular sites. Authorized individuals may use Department computers and devices for duty-related social networking.
- C. The Department P.I.O. should monitor department social media accounts throughout their work day. Replies and other interactions on the Department social media accounts are encouraged. Public comments that are profane, personal attacks or otherwise inappropriate or off-topic are subject to removal. Repeat offenders should be blocked. Compliments or complaints regarding the professional duty or conduct of employees will be forwarded to the employee’s supervisor for follow up in accordance with applicable directives.

- D. Postings must be appropriate and within professional and ethical standards. Content may originate from within the Department or from outside sources, if relevant to the Mission and goals of the agency.
- E. Inappropriate content shall include postings that jeopardize officer safety, reveal tactics, compromise investigation(s), violate victim rights, or violate specific statutes related to protecting privacy (FERPA, HIPPA).
- F. Posting inappropriate content may violate University work rules and be subject to discipline.
- G. The Department maintains a general Facebook account as well as a specific page for the UWPD First Responders. Other accounts, such as those designated for community officers, may be authorized. Any proposed account must be approved by the Department P.I.O. and the Chief of Police or designee. The type of account (person, group) may be dictated by Facebook rules or may be specified by the Chief of Police or designee. The function of a Facebook page is to provide information in an immediate and personal manner. Crimes where public involvement may assist in identifying a suspect and urgent breaking news, such as an endangered missing person, may be appropriate postings.
- H. The Department maintains a general Twitter account. Other accounts may be authorized by the Department P.I.O. and the Chief of Police (or designee). The function of a Twitter account is to quickly disseminate accurate and timely information to self-identified followers. Twitter is useful for a broad range of public safety and crime prevention communications, including immediate alerts of traffic, fire or other potential hazards, community event information, PIO releases regarding arrests, photos of wanted suspects, response to citizen inquiries and social interaction. Responses to inquiries should be as timely as possible. Breaking news tweets must be monitored and updated.
- I. The Department maintains a general YouTube account. Other accounts may be authorized by the Department P.I.O. and the Chief of Police (or designee). The function of YouTube is to share videos created by the Department. The University has an account with YouTube that may be used upon request.