

		Policy & Procedures			No. 4.25	
		Subject:				
		Social Media Policy				
		Issuing Authority:		Effective Date:	Review Date:	
		Chief of Police		04/26/2019	11/10/2023	
				References:		
Review						
Revision	11/17/2020					
Reissued						
Dates:						

CALEA STANDARDS: 54.1.2

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Professionalism, ethics, and integrity are of paramount importance in the law enforcement community. To achieve and maintain the public's highest level of respect, we must place reasonable restrictions on our conduct and appearance, and hold to these standards of conduct whether on or off duty. An employee's actions on the internet must never bring the department into disrepute, nor should conduct be detrimental to its efficient operation.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Canton Police Department to:

Utilize computer resources (Agencies social media accounts such as Twitter, FaceBook to name a few) to enhance our ability to perform our mission and improve officer safety through the availability of information while maximizing security protocols and system integrity. **54.1.2 (2A)**

Employees of the Canton Police Department have a right to have personal web pages or social networking sites. Use of Canton Police Department computers or equipment for the purpose of social networking is prohibited, along with accessing social networking sites from any other peripheral device while on duty, or working. Exceptions to this rule may be discussed with a supervisor/OIC if the purpose of its use is associated with a pending, or on-going investigation.

Employees of the Canton Police Department are also prohibited from posting, transmitting and/or disseminating any photographs, video or audio recordings, likenesses or images of departmental logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked or unmarked vehicles, equipment or other material that specifically identifies the Canton Police Department, on any personal or social networking website or web page, without the express written permission of the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to give employees guidance regarding appropriate content for personal, social networking websites, web pages and other electronically transmitted or hard copied material with respect to the use of Canton Police Department images, material, logos, or reference to those entities. The integrity of this Department must be above reproach. Employee's personal sites are subject to admissibility in court proceedings. Therefore, all employees must avoid any conduct which would compromise this Department's integrity and thus, undercut the public confidence in this Department or this profession.

IV. PROCEDURE 54.1.2 (2B)

No employee shall represent themselves, directly or indirectly, in any public forum as a member of the Canton Police Department either by text, photograph, or image depicting the uniform, badge, patches, marked or unmarked vehicles, equipment, or other material that specifically identifies the Canton Police Department with other information, opinion, or posture that would bring unfavorable criticism or embarrassment upon the department. All employees shall make note of the following procedures as it relates to social networking:

- a. Employees having personal web pages or other types of internet postings which can be accessed by the public, shall not place or allow photographs or depictions of themselves dressed in uniform and/or displaying official identification, patches or badges, or in any other way, either directly or indirectly, identify themselves as an employee of the Canton Police Department for any reason, without approval as indicated in this policy.
- b. Photographs or other depictions of department uniforms, badges, patches, marked or unmarked cruisers shall not be posted on personal internet sites without the expressed written approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.

- c. Photographs of the inside of the police building as well as any crime or accident scene shall not be posted without the consent of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- d. Employees are prohibited from posting, transmitting, and or disseminating any pictures or videos of official department training, activities, or work-related assignments without the express written consent of the Chief of Police, or his/her designee. This includes, but is not limited to any photographs taken of crime scenes, automobile collisions, or mug shots.
- e. Employees wishing to use photographs, depictions, or references to the Canton Police Department must receive approval of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- f. Employees are prohibited from posting, on any public forum, any information regarding any past/active investigations, which are conducted because of their employment with the Canton Police Department without the express consent of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- g. Employees are prohibited from using Department titles, logos, emblems, uniforms and other material to create business cards, letterhead or similar material without the written consent of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- h. Employees are prohibited from using their title/position in private correspondence, whether electronic or hard copied. This includes, but is not limited to, signature lines in a personal email account, without the express consent of the Chief of Police.
- i. The exception to this Policy are portraits, photographs or any video recordings taken during Department-sanctioned, official ceremonies such as Police Academy graduation, promotional ceremonies, etc. These photographs and/or recordings shall not disgrace or disparage employees or the Department in any manner, nor shall said items be placed on any webpage or other electronic media or in hard copied media material that in any way brings discredit to the Department of the profession.
- j. Employees who post photos, comments, etc. of other department employees must inform and seek approval from the employee(s) before posting same.
- k. Any employee becoming aware of having knowledge of a posting of any website or web page in violation of the provisions of this policy shall notify his/her supervisor/OIC immediately.

- l. Sites deemed inappropriate, whether an employment association or not, bringing discredit to the Canton Police Department or promoting misconduct, whether on or off duty, may be investigated through internal administrative procedure or through a criminal process.
- m. All employees shall treat as confidential the official business of the Canton Police Department.
- n. No employee shall release, either directly or indirectly, information concerning crimes, accidents, or violations of ordinances or statutes to persons outside the Canton Police Department without seeking approval from a Supervisor/OIC.
- o. No Employee shall reveal any unauthorized information to any person not a member of the Canton Police Department unless otherwise authorized to receive such information, such as another law enforcement agency.
- p. No employee shall gossip about the affairs of the Canton Police Department with persons outside the agency.
- q. If an employee indicates in any public forum any opinion on a police/communications related issue, then that employee shall state that the views and opinions expressed are the employee's personal ones, and not those of the Canton Police Department.

Note: Any employee seeking approval to use reference to the Canton Police Department on any personal website, web page, or other public forum shall submit a request for approval to the Chief of Police or his/her designee via the chain of command. Employees are reminded to exercise good judgment and demonstrate personal accountability when choosing to participate on social networking sites.