

**MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
GENERAL ORDER**

CHAPTER 01- ADMINISTRATION
GO 01-18
PAGE 1 OF 3

DATE
1-23-17

DEPARTMENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

POLICY

Sheriff's Office Social Media Team members shall ensure that the use of access of social media is done in a manner that protects the constitutional rights of all. The Marin County Sheriff's Office endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, information exchange, and to streamline processes and foster productivity. This policy establishes the Department's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media; rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

DEFINITIONS

Social Media: Any of a wide array of Internet-based tools and platforms that allow for the sharing of information, such as the department website or social networking services that include, but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Nixle, etc.

Social Media Team: Sheriff's Office employees who have received specific training in the proper use of social media to disseminate information on behalf of the Department.

PROCEDURE

The Marin County Sheriff's Office may use social media as a method for effectively informing the public about department services, issues, investigations and other relevant events. This policy provides guidelines to ensure that any use of social media on behalf of the Marin County Sheriff's Office is consistent with the Department's mission and philosophy.

This policy does not address all aspects of social media use. Specifically, it does not address:

- Personal use of social media by department members (See GO 01-17, Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking)
- Use of social media as part of a criminal investigation, other than disseminating information to the public on behalf of this department.

Social Media Team members shall receive training that, at a minimum, discusses the goals of the Sheriff's Office social media efforts and addresses legal issues concerning the appropriate use of social media, as well as privacy rights, and the dissemination and retention of information posted on department sites.

Social Media Team members authorized by the Sheriff or the Press Information Officer may utilize social media on behalf of the Department. Social Media Team members are encouraged to use only

department owned equipment for posting messages to, or monitoring messages from, social media sites, as content on those devices may later become subject to inspection pursuant to the California Public Records Act (PRA) or the Federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The Sheriff may develop specific guidelines identifying the type of content that may be posted. Any content that does not strictly conform to the guidelines should be approved by the Watch Commander or higher authority prior to posting.

Only content that is appropriate for public release, that supports the Department mission or philosophy, and conforms to all department policies regarding the release of information may be posted.

Examples of appropriate content include, but are not limited to:

- Announcements
- Tips and information related to crime prevention
- Investigative requests for information
- Requests that ask the community to engage in projects that are relevant to the Department mission and philosophy
- Real-time safety information that is related to in-progress crimes, geographical warnings, or disaster information.
- Traffic information.
- Press releases
- Recruitment of new personnel.

Examples of prohibited content include, but are not limited to:

- Content that is abusive, discriminatory, inflammatory or sexually explicit.
- Any information that violates individual rights, including confidentiality and/or privacy rights and those provided under state, federal or local laws.
- Any information that could compromise an ongoing investigation.
- Any information that could tend to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Marin County Sheriff's Office, or its members and employees.
- Any information that could compromise the safety and security of department operations, employees of the department, victims, suspects, or the public.
- Any content posted for personal use.
- Any content that has not been properly authorized by this policy or a supervisor.

Any member of the Social Media Team who becomes aware of content on the department's social media sites that he/she believes is unauthorized or inappropriate should promptly report such content to a supervisor. The supervisor will ensure its removal from public view and investigate the cause of the entry.

Incidents that involve active criminal investigations or have the potential to create special significance for the Department, the Public Information Officer, and/or his/her specific designee, shall be responsible for the compilation and dissemination of information released, subject to approval of the Investigations Division Commander, when the incident resides within his/her work unit, or the Watch Commander in all other cases.

AFFECTED DIVISIONS:

ALL

RELATED STANDARDS:

GO 01-17 - Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking
Marin County Personnel Management Regulation 23 - Information Technology Resources

DATE REVISED:

N/A

By order of

ROBERT T. DOYLE
SHERIFF-CORONER