



Lexington Police Department

Lexington, Kentucky

GENERAL ORDER

BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

G.O. 2011-01A Social Media

Rescinds: GO 2011-01

Effective Date: 11/25/17

Distribution

| All Department Employees

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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to endorse the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; 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. It is not meant to address one particular form of social media; rather social media in general, as advances in social media technology will occur.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Lexington Police Department that social media provides a valuable opportunity to assist the department and its employees in meeting community outreach, problem solving, investigative, crime prevention, and related objectives. This policy identifies potential uses of social media that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed appropriate by the Chief of Police.

The department recognizes the role of social media in the personal lives of employees. The personal use of social media can also have bearing on employees in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as prohibitions on the use of social media by employees.

It is not the intent or purpose of this policy to affect, prevent or disrupt any otherwise authorized and legitimate law enforcement operations or criminal investigations that involve the use of social media or involve the internet. In these cases the appropriate bureau shall have specific policies that control these activities.

III. DEFINITIONS

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments.

Page: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

Post: Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile: Information that a user provides about themselves on a social networking site.

Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook), micro-blogging sites (Twitter), photo and video sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).

Social Networks: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communications.

Wiki: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

IV. ON-THE-JOB USE

A. Department-Sanctioned Presence

1. Strategy

- a. Where possible, the page(s) should link to the department's official website.
- b. Social media page(s) shall be designed for the target audience.

2. Procedures

- a. All Lexington Police Department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police and shall be administered by the Public Information Office in accordance with CAO Policy 50 Social Media Policy.
- b. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Lexington Police Department and have contact information prominently displayed.
- c. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.
- d. Where possible, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Lexington Police Department.
 1. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the administrator reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, personal attacks, or any other content deemed inappropriate by the department.
 2. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.

3. Department-Sanctioned Use

- a. Sworn and civilian employees representing the department via social media outlets

shall do the following:

1. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department and, accordingly, shall adhere to all standards of conduct, and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
2. Identify themselves as a member of the Lexington Police Department.
3. Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning ongoing investigations or pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to training, activities, or work-related assignments without permission from the Public Information Office.
4. Not conduct political activities or private business.

B. Potential Uses

1. The following list of uses is not intended to be all-inclusive. Employees are encouraged to develop and use social media to support department objectives and within the guidelines of this policy.
2. Social media is a valuable investigative tool when seeking evidence or information about:
 - a. Missing persons
 - b. Wanted persons
 - c. Gang participation
 - d. Crimes perpetrated online (such as cyberbullying and cyberstalking)
 - e. Photos, videos or other evidence of a crime posted by a participant or observer.

Note: Anonymous tips, including photos and videos, can be submitted by texting LEXPD plus the tip to CRIMES (274637). Information can also be sent anonymously through Bluegrass Crime Stoppers at (859) 253-2020 or bluegrasscrimestoppers.com.

3. Social media may be used for community outreach and engagement by:
 - a. Providing crime prevention tips
 - b. Offering online reporting opportunities
 - c. Sharing crime maps and data
 - d. Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes

- e. Highlighting department programs and activities
4. Social media may be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to:
- a. Road closures
 - b. Special events
 - c. Weather emergencies
 - d. Missing or endangered persons (i.e. Amber and Golden Alert incidents)
 - e. Other incidents that the department wants to inform or to enlist assistance from the public.
5. Persons seeking employment and volunteer positions use the Internet to search for opportunities, and social media can be a valuable recruitment mechanism.

V. PERSONAL USE

A. Precautions and Prohibitions

1. Officers shall refer to GO series 1973-02 Disciplinary Procedures of Sworn Officers for additional guidance regarding social media use.
2. Department employees should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and the department. When using social media, department employees should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the department's policies regarding conduct is required in the personal use of social media.
3. Engaging in prohibited speech noted herein, may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer's testimony in criminal proceedings.
4. Department employees should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by any individual, group, or government agency, including this department, at any time without prior notice.
5. Department employees may not post content to their personal social media account (such as text, photos and videos) that relates to the department's response to calls for service or criminal investigations. With the exception of live streaming video, employees may post content of themselves in uniform as well as content related to non-enforcement department activities (such as community events, social functions, etc.). Employees shall use good judgment and be aware of how the content reflects on themselves, other people and the department.

B. Intellectual Property Protections

1. Several social networking portals offer protection to members, and the general public,

against the unauthorized use of their likeness, image or intellectual property. Social networking site users, and members of the public, can request help directly from the social networking site to address problems stemming from intellectual property theft and the unauthorized use of a likeness or image.