

# MEDINA POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER

**ORDER NO: 2017-012**

**SUBJECT: Social Media**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/14/2017**

**RESCINDS ORDER NO:**

**DISTRIBUTION:** All Department Personnel

**PURPOSE:** The Medina Police Department endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy establishes this 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. This policy also ensures that the Medina Police Department's likenesses, images, sensitive material and other related items are not released or displayed on social media and that employees of the Medina Police Department are not using social media or other forms of media for personal benefit or gains.

## I. DEFINITIONS:

**Social Media:** Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. This includes, but is not limited to Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, Twitter, Nixle, Flickr, YouTube, Etc.

**Social Networking:** The use of dedicated websites and applications to interact with other users, or to find people with similar interests to oneself.

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

**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.

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

## II. POLICY

A. Department Sanctioned Presence – Official Use

1. Determine Strategy –
  1. Where possible, the Medina Police Department social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the agency’s presence on the website.
  2. Social media content will be designed with the specific target audience in mind
2. Content Procedures –
  - a.) All department social media sites or pages must be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and will be administered, including regular monitoring by the Chief of Police or designee.
  - b.) Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations and policies.
  - c.) All department social media sites welcome the opinions expressed by visitors to the sites however such opinions will not reflect the opinions of the Department.
  - d.) The Medina Police Department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off- topic comments, and personal attacks
3. Posting Procedure –
  - a.) Personnel shall comply with all departmental standards of conduct, identify themselves as members of the department
  - b.) Comments or statements regarding their opinion of the guilt or innocence of any suspect, arrestee or defendant shall not be posted.
  - c.) Posting, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating confidential information, including photographs or videos, relating to work related assignments, activities or training will not be allowed without the permission of the Chief of Police or designee.
  - d.) No political activities or private business shall be conducted on department social media sites.

B. Personal Use

**\*precautions and prohibitions: Absent State Law or binding labor agreements to the contrary, Department personnel shall abide by the following when using social media\***

1. Medina Police Department Personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair the working relationship of this Department for which trust and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Medina Police Department.
2. Medina Police Department Personnel, as public employees, are cautioned that speech, on and off duty, made pursuant to their official duties – that is, that owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities – is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the Medina Police Department.

- a.) Any speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, acts, or statements will be prohibited.
  - b.) Other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals will be prohibited.
3. Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information or imagery involving the Medina Police Department, to include, but not limited to: names of suspects, witnesses or Officers, operational information, case information, evidentiary images, uniforms, patches, badges or department owned property, etc. without permission from the Chief of Police or designee. \*Exceptions shall include Department sanctioned events, or gatherings such as swearing in, promotion, or award ceremonies.
  4. Department personnel are prohibited from using their position of employment via social media to make contacts, establish or attempt to establish relationships, other than for official professional business, with any person.
  5. Department personnel are prohibited from using/posting on social media while on duty unless it is necessary to fulfill duties for the job.

C. Violations

1. Any department employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provisions of this policy shall immediately notify their supervisor.
2. Employees of the Medina Police Department who are found to have violated any of the provisions of this policy are subject to criminal prosecution and/or departmental sanctions.

By Order Of:

Chad Kenward  
Chief of Police