



# TALLAHASSEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDERS

 Proudly Policing Since 1841	<b>SUBJECT</b>  Social Media Protocols		 Nationally Accredited 1986
	<b>CHIEF OF POLICE</b>  <i>Signature on File</i>		
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### AUTHORITY/RELATED REFERENCES

City of Tallahassee Administrative Policy 408, Social Media and Collaboration  
 City of Tallahassee Administrative Policy 706, Working Conditions  
 General Order 19, Digital Devices and Media  
 General Order 42, Impounding and Controlling of Property and Evidence  
 General Order 46, Rules of Conduct  
 General Order 77, Computer and Data Utilization

### ACCREDITATION REFERENCES

CALEA Chapter 26

### KEY WORD INDEX

<b>Authorized Utilization of Personally-owned Equipment</b>	Procedure IV
<b>Department-related Use of Social Media</b>	Procedure II
<b>General Guidelines</b>	Procedure I
<b>Prohibited Conduct</b>	Procedure III

### POLICY

The Department shall establish procedures addressing member utilization of social media and social networking insofar as it affects its members, the Department and the City of Tallahassee, and the policing profession. Members are responsible for adhering to the established social media and social networking protocols in the course of their official duties and at other times when so directed by this policy.

### DEFINITIONS

**Off-duty:** When a member is not engaged in on-duty or secondary employment activity.

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**On-duty:** When a member is working their regular duty assignment or any special assignment compensated by the Department.

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

**Secondary Employment:** Any employment with an entity other than the City of Tallahassee where a condition of the employment is the actual or potential use of law enforcement powers by the member.

**Social Media:** A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation.

**Social Networking:** The Internet activity involving the utilization of online platforms to 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 communication.

### PROCEDURES

#### I. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. The Department supports each member's freedom to engage in social media and social networking activities while off-duty.
- B. Members are responsible for ensuring their off-duty social media and social networking activities adhere to established rules of conduct as outlined in General Order 46 (Rules of Conduct).
- C. Members are cautioned their on-duty and off-duty speech made pursuant to their official duties (i.e., it exists because of the member's Department responsibilities) is generally not protected speech under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.
- D. Members should expect any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed on a social media or social networking site or platform may be accessed by the Department at any time without prior notice.
- E. A member having knowledge of any violation of this written directive shall notify their immediate supervisor for follow-up action.

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1. The notification shall occur promptly.
2. If more appropriate due to the circumstances of the violation, the member may notify their supervisor's supervisor.

### II. DEPARTMENT-RELATED USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. The approval authority for Department-related social media and social networking activities rests solely with the Chief of Police or appointed designee, and may include:
  1. Overt activities (e.g., Public Information Office),
  2. Covert activities (e.g., Criminal Investigations Division), and
  3. The utilization of City of Tallahassee (COT) equipment for such activities.
- B. Members involved in Department-related social media and social networking activities are responsible for the following:
  1. Adhering to the established rules of conduct as outlined in General Order 46 (Rules of Conduct).
  2. Abiding by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions.
  3. Not using speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, acts and statements except as warranted in certain covert activities.
  4. Not using speech that ridicules, maligns, disparages, or otherwise expresses bias against any person or persons based upon race, creed, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, social or citizenship status or any protected class of persons under federal laws.
- C. Members are not authorized to utilize personally-owned equipment to *manage* any Department-related social media and social networking activity.
- D. The prohibition in subsection C above is not applicable to a member's *interaction* with a Department-related social media or social networking site or platform when off-duty (e.g., posting on the Department's Facebook page).

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- E. Members involved in Department-related social media and social networking activities are responsible for ensuring such activity is not disruptive to the work environment.

### III. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- A. Members shall not access, post to, or otherwise utilize any social media or social networking site or platform while on duty or engaged in secondary employment except for:
  - 1. A purpose authorized in section II A above, or
  - 2. Other Department-related endeavors (e.g., check of a weather or news website that features a social media or social networking platform) when such access:
    - a. Is brief,
    - b. Does not interfere with the member's work assignment,
    - c. Is not disruptive to the work environment, and
    - d. Does not involve the member posting to the site or platform.
- B. Members are prohibited from utilizing COT equipment to participate in any social media and social networking activity except as authorized in section II A above.
- C. Unless for a purpose authorized in section II A above, members shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate to any social media or social networking site or platform:
  - 1. Information to which they have access as a result of their COT employment.
  - 2. Opinions about any encounter with the public as a result of their job-related function, whether on-duty or while engaged in secondary employment.
  - 3. Any photograph/digital image, video, or sound recording of incident scenes, crime scenes, or traffic crash scenes, and of:
    - a. Persons, vehicles, facilities, and evidence related to those scenes, and

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- b. Statements, comments, and investigative and prosecutorial efforts related to those scenes.
- D. Members shall not create, post, respond to, modify, or in any way participate in, or take ownership of, information or images on any social media or social networking site or platform which could be reasonably interpreted as:
- 1. Bringing discredit to the City of Tallahassee, the Department, or the policing profession,
  - 2. Jeopardizing any member's safety, or impeding any member's job performance,
  - 3. Damaging any mission, function, or planned action of the Department,
  - 4. Adversely affecting the outcome of a criminal or administrative investigation,
  - 5. Impairing the harmony among members, or
  - 6. Adversely affecting the Department's professional relationships with other public service entities.
- E. Except as described in section IV below, members are not authorized to utilize personally-owned equipment to capture or create photographs/digital images, videos, or sound recordings of incident scenes, crime scenes, traffic crash scenes, or persons, vehicles, facilities and evidence related to those scenes.

#### **IV. AUTHORIZED UTILIZATION OF PERSONALLY-OWNED EQUIPMENT**

The Chief of Police or designee may approve the utilization of personally-owned equipment to capture or create photographs/digital images, videos, or sound recordings during a member's involvement with certain Department-related events.

A. Examples of such events include:

- 1. Interaction with citizens at a COT-sponsored event,
- 2. "Officer Friendly" visit at a local school (after receiving permission from school administrators),
- 3. Recruiting event or job fair,

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4. Uniformed members attending a local community event, and
  5. Members engaged in traffic control during a large-scale traffic crash or critical incident.
- B. Any member who chooses to capture or create photographs/digital images, videos, or sound recordings on personally-owned equipment does so knowing the images may or may not be disseminated via the Department's official social media site for promotion of the Department.
- C. If a photograph/digital image, video, or sound recording on personally-owned equipment is to be posted, it will be posted only to an official social media site hosted by the Department, and:
1. Only be transmitted via Department e-mail to the Public Information Officer or other Chief of Police designee, and
  2. Only be posted by the Public Information Officer or other Chief of Police designee.
- D. Even when authorized to utilize personally-owned devices as described in this section, members remain bound by the protocols outlined in other areas of this written directive.

History: issued 11/14/2014.