

	POLICY & PROCEDURE	SERIES # 1903	PAGE 1 OF 6
	SUBJECT		EFFECTIVE DATE
	DIVISION SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING		02/25/2020
			OVERSIGHT CHIEFS OFFICE
DISTRIBUTION	AMENDS/SUPERSEDES/CANCELS		
ALL MANUALS	P&P # 1903 dated 09/29/10.		

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to direct employees of the Hampton Police Division with respect to the use of the internet and social network media as a medium of communication impacting the image and operation of this agency.

II. POLICY:

The internet, blogs, twitter, the worldwide web, social networking sites and any other medium of electronic communication shall not be used in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of the Hampton Police Division.

It is essential for every employee of the Hampton Police Division to recognize that the proper functioning of any law enforcement agency relies upon the public's confidence and trust in sworn and civilian personnel and the agency to carry out law enforcement functions within the community. Therefore, any matter which brings individual employee(s) or the agency into disrepute has the corresponding effect of reducing public confidence and trust in our agency, thus impeding our ability to work with and serve the public. Professionalism is the most significant factor in high level performance which in turn builds public confidence and trust. While employees have the right to use personal/social networking pages or sites, as employees of the Hampton Police Division, they are held to a high standard with regard to standards of conduct and ethics. As such, the policy of the Hampton Police Division is to maintain a level of professionalism in both on-duty and off-duty conduct that fulfills the mission and function of the agency. Any publication, through any medium which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the agency will be deemed a violation of this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Social Network Media - internet and mobile-based tools for interacting with other and for sharing and discussing information. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interactions. Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, among others.

APPROVED:
CHIEF OF POLICE



- B. Site - Site refers to the social media account and pages, e.g. Facebook page, Twitter account, etc.
- C. Post - A response, opinion or content submitted to a (social media) site.

IV. PROCEDURE:

A. Use of Division Social Media Networking

1. Account Creation - The official Hampton Police Division account and use of social media networks on behalf of the Division must be authorized by the Chief of Police and comply with Hampton City Personnel Administrative Instruction 10.2.
2. Identification and Origin - Statements posted on official social media accounts are made on behalf of the Hampton Police Division; thus, the response will be organizational. Official posts will be identified with the division's name and official logo.
3. Acceptable Use - All use of social media technologies should be consistent with applicable state, federal, and local laws, regulations and policies.
4. Division members shall receive prior authorization or permission to act as designated members or site administrators.
5. Designated members will implement the Division's social media strategies during the course of normal business hours.
6. Official content posted by the designated members will accomplish and support these initiatives: community policing, reputation management, customer service, public relations and awareness, and crime prevention/solution.
7. Disclaimers will be posted on social networking sites, if deemed necessary.
8. All official Hampton Police Division social media accounts shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
9. Communication through social media is considered a public record and will be managed as such.

10. Content submitted for posting that is deemed unsuitable for posting by the designated members because it is not topically relevant or is deemed prohibited content based on the criteria outlined below (item 12), shall be hidden retained pursuant to records retention schedule along with a description of the reason the specific content is deemed not suitable for posting.
11. Hampton Police Division social networking content and comments containing any of the following shall not be allowed for posting and may be hidden from public view:
 - a. Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon;
 - b. Vulgar language or content;
 - c. Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - e. Solicitations of commerce, non-city services, products or political organizations;
 - f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security or proceedings of the public or public systems, or any criminal or civil investigations and/or litigation;
 - h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
or
 - i. Spam or links to other sites.
12. Division members who fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to the disciplinary procedures.
13. Designated members will monitor the content on each of the Division social media accounts to ensure adherence to the Division Social Media Policy for appropriate use and message.
14. It is the responsibility of all Division members to inform and alert the site administrators of inappropriate posts, especially those submitted outside of business hours and on weekends.

15. The language of official content or posting will be professional, familiar and in layman terms.

B. Personal Use of Social Networking Media:

Employees of the Hampton Police Division are prohibited from posting, or in any other way broadcasting, without prior authorization from the Chief of Police, information on social network media, or any other medium of communication, the business of this agency to include but not limited to any information or imagery, such as arrest photos, accident scene photos, crime scene photos, official or unofficial reports, or information gained in their official capacity to which they have access to as a result of their employment.

1. For safety and security reasons, Hampton Police Division personnel are cautioned to use discretion when disclosing their employment with the agency, and not to post information pertaining to any other member of the Hampton Police Division without their permission.
2. Officers who are or may be reasonably expected to work in undercover operations shall not post personal photographs or provide similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as a police officer of the Hampton Police Division.

C. Accuracy and Integrity

1. Hampton Police Division members must not knowingly communicate inaccurate or false information.
2. All reasonable efforts should be made by the Division members to provide only verifiable facts – not unverifiable opinions.
3. Division members will act and conduct themselves according to the highest possible ethical standards.
 - a. Respect and protection of citizens are paramount.
 - b. Strive for transparency and openness in interactions
 - c. Provide links to credible sources of information to support interactions, when possible
 - d. Publicly correct any information that has been published that is later found to be in error
 - e. Respect rules set forth by the social media sites
 - f. Protect privacy and permissions

- g. When expressing an individual opinion, explicitly say so and identify themselves as individuals and not as the representative voice of the Division (see Rule & Regulation 4.19)

D. Confidentiality vs. Transparency

1. Confidentiality: Hampton Police Division members must protect all information that is considered to be confidential in nature or information that if released could jeopardize ongoing investigations or future prosecutions.
2. Transparency: Hampton Police Division members must communicate as much information as possible, without disclosing information. Transparency builds community public trust and confidence

- E. Personnel may post pictures in uniform or display other Department logos or similar identifying items at their discretion, as long as such display does not bring discredit or shame to the agency.

- F. Employees of the Hampton Police Division who utilize social network media or other mediums of communication in their off duty time shall maintain an appropriate level of professionalism and conduct so as not to broadcast in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.

1. Employees of the Hampton Police Division shall not:
 - a. Use social network media or other mediums of communication to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature; and
 - b. Use social network media or other mediums to promote the usage of any type of weapon that conveys violence or oppression; and
 - c. Use any speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, acts, statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion or any other protected class; and
 - d. Use speech involving themselves or other Hampton Police Personnel, which reflects behavior that could reasonably be considered as reckless or irresponsible.
2. New Employees: All candidates seeking employment with the Hampton Police Division shall be required to complete an affidavit indicating their

participation in any social network media. The affidavit will include the name of each social network medium and grant to the assigned background investigator access to individual accounts as part of any pre-employment background examination.

3. Administrative Investigations: Employees of the Hampton Police Division who are subject to administrative investigations may be ordered to provide the agency investigator with access to the employee's social network media accounts when:
 - a. The subject of the investigation specifically pertains to the employee's conduct through social network media and
 - b. The subject of the investigation is directly, narrowly, and specifically related to the employee's performance or ability to perform his or her function within the agency, or
 - c. When the subject of the investigation is potentially adverse to the morale, mission or function of the Hampton Police Division.

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