



MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

685 – SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS) AND DEPARTMENT IMAGES

GENERAL ORDER: 2021-XX
ISSUED: November 15, 2021

EFFECTIVE: November 15, 2021

REVIEWED/APPROVED BY:
Inspector Shunta Boston-Smith
DATE: September 15, 2021

ACTION: Amends General Order 2017-30 (May 25, 2017)

WILEAG STANDARD(S): NONE

685.00 PURPOSE

The Milwaukee Police Department endorses the secure use of social networking sites to enhance communication. This policy establishes the department's position on the management and use of social networking sites and provides guidance on its administration and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social networking sites; rather social networking sites in general. This policy also establishes the department's position and management on the use of the department logo and images by members of the department.

685.05 POLICY

The department recognizes the role that social networking sites can play in the personal lives of department members. Personal use of social networking can also have bearing on members in their official capacity. This policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as prohibitions on the use of social networking sites by members.

685.10 DEFINITIONS

A. DEPARTMENT IMAGES

A visual representation or likeness that includes, but is not limited to, the following: department buildings, equipment, personnel, or property.

B. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNS)

A category of internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (such as Facebook, LinkedIn), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).

685.15 USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

A. PRECAUTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS

Department personnel shall abide by the following when using social networking sites.

1. The use of department computers or any electronic device owned by the

department which is capable of accessing the internet by department personnel to access social media sites is prohibited without supervisory authorization.

2. Members shall not use MPD e-mail addresses for registration of their personal SNSs.
3. Members should be aware that privacy settings on SNSs are constantly in flux. Members should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected and private.
4. Members should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public on-line forum may be accessed by the department at any time without prior notice. There is no expectation of privacy in such communication. While the department does not actively monitor member off duty use of SNSs, the department does have the right to look and take appropriate lawful action if it comes to our attention that usage violates the department Code of Conduct, conflicts with job duties, interferes with the department's mission, or breaches confidential departmental information.
5. As public employees, members do not lose their rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. and Wisconsin constitutions. However, speech, on or off duty, pursuant to your official duties and professional responsibilities as members of the Milwaukee Police Department is not protected. Members are free to express themselves as private citizens on SNSs to the degree that their speech is not disruptive to the mission of the department.
6. Members shall not represent themselves as a member of the department on your personal website or SNSs in any manner which brings or is likely to bring discredit upon the department. Any such conduct may be investigated in order to establish whether or not a breach of the MPD Code of Conduct has occurred. Any member who references the department in his or her private SNS use shall make clear that the views expressed are the employee's private views and not those of the department.

Note: A captain of police, or higher ranking member, may direct a member to immediately remove any posts or content from their personal website or SNS if it brings or is likely to bring discredit upon the department prior to an investigation being concluded.

7. Members who identify themselves as members of the department when using SNSs shall comply with the department Code of Conduct, SOPs, the U.S. and Wisconsin constitutions, federal and state statutes, city of Milwaukee ordinances and department anti-harassment policies. Members using SNSs shall not knowingly post false or defamatory information regarding the Milwaukee Police Department, the city of Milwaukee, its employees, or members of the public.
8. Members shall treat the official business of the department as confidential, and may not impart it on SNSs to anyone except those for whom it is intended or under

due process of law.

9. The line between public and private, personal and professional communication on SNSs can be blurred. When using SNSs members should be mindful that their communications may become part of the worldwide electronic domain indefinitely, therefore, adherence to the Code of Conduct is required.
10. Members must be aware that their communication on SNSs can be used by a skilled defense attorney in impeaching testimony in association with their professional duties as a member of the department.
11. Members are prohibited from posting, transmitting, disseminating any pictures, audio and/or videos of official department activities without the express written permission of the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
12. Members shall not post Milwaukee Police Department images or logos including the MPD badge, MPD patch, or MPD unit specific logos on any personal site if they are displayed in an offensive or derogatory manner, or bring discredit to the department, its members, or the city of Milwaukee.
13. Members who become aware of or have knowledge of a posting in violation of the provisions of this policy shall notify a supervisor immediately.
14. Members are prohibited from the following:
 - a. Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, acts and statements or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, any religion, or any protected class of individuals.
 - b. Speech involving themselves or other departmental personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.
 - c. Speech that discloses information protected under copyright, is proprietary, or represents an unauthorized disclosure of confidential department activities.

B. RIGHT TO PRIVACY – ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Members shall adhere to those portions of SOP 680 Computer Equipment, Applications and Systems as they relate to the use of electronic communication.

685.20 DEPARTMENT-SANCTIONED USE

The police department recognizes the value and importance of social media in daily operations. As such, the department elects to have a strong presence on various social networking sites. While acting in this role, authorized members will adhere to guidelines set forth by this standard operating procedure.

A. PROCEDURES

1. All official department social networking sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or designee and shall be administered by the Public Information Office.
2. Where possible, social networking pages sanctioned by the Chief of Police or his/her designee shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Milwaukee Police Department and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.
3. Social networking site pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the department and can be removed by the department at its discretion.
4. All communications sent or received on department SNS, including those sent or received on privately owned equipment, are public record and subject to disclosure under the Wisconsin public records law if the content of the communication relates to city of Milwaukee / Milwaukee Police Department business. Such communication is also subject to Wisconsin record retention laws and must be properly indexed and stored consistent with applicable laws.
5. Department personnel authorized to represent the department via social networking sites shall do the following:
 - a. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department and, accordingly, shall adhere to all department standards of conduct and proper decorum.
 - b. Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to departmental training, activities, or work-related assignments without express written permission.
 - c. Not conduct political activities or private business.
6. Members using department-issued equipment for social media communication shall use care in protecting the safety and security of the equipment and of the information transmitted on the equipment to ensure that official MPD business is kept confidential. Members shall not impart information to anyone except those for whom it is intended, as directed by the Chief of Police or his/her designee, or as ordered by law.
7. Members have access to highly confidential information. No member may use MPD confidential information except for official MPD business. Members shall use care when using such communication devices in a public area to ensure that the communication is not seen or heard by any member of the public, or by other MPD

employees who do not have a valid reason to have access to the information communicated.

8. Members shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

B. CROWD FUNDING AND CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Members shall not use their position or membership in the Milwaukee Police Department to solicit charitable donations or establish crowd funding campaigns (e.g., Go Fund Me, Kickstarter) without approval from the Chief of Police or his/her designee. Members shall request approval by submitting a *Department Memorandum* (form PM-9E) through the chain of command.

Note: This does not prohibit members from soliciting charitable donations or establishing crowd funding campaigns so long as they do not identify themselves as a department member or reference the agency.

685.25 DEPARTMENT-SANCTIONED USE OF MERCHANDISE AND CHALLENGE COINS

Members shall not utilize any Milwaukee Police Department images or logos including the MPD badge, MPD patch, or MPD unit specific logos on any non-department authorized challenge coins, merchandise, or items (e.g., t-shirts, coffee cups) without the approval of the Chief of Police, or his/her designee.

1. Members shall request approval by submitting a *Department Memorandum* (form PM-9E) through the chain of command. Members shall include an image containing the final product design that includes the Milwaukee Police Department image or logo with their *Department Memorandum*.
2. Challenge coins, merchandise, or items that are approved shall not be purchased through the department's operating budget without the approval of the Chief of Police, or designee.



JEFFREY B. NORMAN
ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE