

**HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**POLICY**  
**ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND ADMINISTRATION**

**May 21, 2019**

**Policy Number 2.72**

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

**POLICY**

Employees are expected to maintain professionalism and uphold the integrity of the department when representing the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) on social media websites or when using the Internet to access and engage in social networking sites.

**PROCEDURE**

I. **BACKGROUND**

Use of social media by the HPD is intended to be used as a means of communication between the department and the public. Social media provides a valuable means of assisting the HPD with community outreach, problem solving, investigations, crime prevention, and other related departmental goals and objectives.

II. **DEFINITIONS**

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

**Employee:** A police officer, civilian, helicopter pilot, reserve officer, contract hire, or volunteer of the HPD.

**Internet:** A worldwide network of interconnected computer networks on which end-user services, such as the World Wide Web or data archives, are located and enable data and other information to be exchanged. The Internet includes commercial, educational, governmental, and other networks. They all use the same set of communication protocols.

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 himself or herself on a social networking site.

Post: Content an individual shares on a social media page or the act of publishing content on a social media site. Content can be in the form of spoken words, stories, photographs, videos, images, or related forms of communication.

Social media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content with user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (i.e., Facebook and Instagram), microblogging sites (i.e., Twitter), photo- and video-sharing sites (i.e., Flickr and YouTube), wikis (i.e., Wikipedia), blogs, bulletin/message boards, and news sites (i.e., Digg and Reddit).

Social network: An online platform where a user can create a profile, post information, and communicate with others using a range of technologies.

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

Uniform Resource Locator (URL): A specific character string that constitutes a reference to an Internet resource. A URL is also commonly called the "web address."

Website: Published page(s) on the World Wide Web. Usually containing hyperlinks and published by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization.

World Wide Web: A system of interlinked, hypertext documents accessed via the Internet. With a web browser, an individual can view web pages that may contain text, images, videos, and other multimedia and navigate between them via hyperlinks.

III. AUTHORIZED USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

- A. The Chief of Police or designee may authorize the use of social networks or social media sites to any element or employee for the purpose of promoting the HPD's mission and goals.
- B. The Virtual Unit, Office of the Chief, shall be responsible for ensuring that the layout of the HPD's social media websites are consistent with the image set by the Chief of Police. All web pages shall comply with this standard.
- C. Any element or employee receiving authorization to use social media sites to represent the HPD shall notify the Information Technology Division (ITD) of the site's URL (e.g., <http://www.youtube.com/thehonoluluupd>). The commander of the ITD or designee shall maintain a list of the HPD's authorized social media sites.
- D. Authorized HPD social media sites shall, whenever practicable, :
  - 1. Indicate that they are maintained by the department;
  - 2. List departmental contact information prominently;
  - 3. Include a disclaimer that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the department and that the HPD reserves the right to remove postings that violate federal, state, city, or departmental rules; regulations; ordinances; policies; or standards (i.e., obscenities, commercial postings, political statements, or endorsements); and
  - 4. Include the URL that links back to the HPD's official website. Additionally, the HPD's official website shall include links to the department's official social media sites.

- E. Department-authorized social media content shall be:
  - 1. Subject to public records laws and relevant retention schedules; and
  - 2. Managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with open records laws, electronic discovery laws, and departmental procedures.
  
- F. Employees shall adhere to the following guidelines when using social media on behalf of the HPD:
  - 1. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the department. Information posted on department-authorized social media websites shall be respectful, professional, and truthful. Corrections shall be issued when necessary;
  - 2. Abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions;
  - 3. Adhere to all departmental policies and rules governing conduct when using social media;
  - 4. Maintain any official HPD social media account created to profile an HPD employee or group. In the event an employee leaves the department, the account shall remain under the control of the HPD;
  - 5. Shall not post speech that would compromise departmental objectives or place another person in danger; and
  - 6. Shall not engage in prohibited speech, as noted herein, as it may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an employee's testimony in criminal and civil proceedings.
  
- G. Investigative Use of Social Media
  - 1. Officers may use social media to conduct investigations. Prior authorization shall be obtained from the Chief of Police or designee.
  - 2. Officers using social media in an undercover capacity shall adhere to the guidelines set forth in the manuals of operations for their respective elements.

3. Search methods for social media shall not involve techniques that violate existing laws.

IV. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. Employees shall be mindful that their speech becomes a published record on the World Wide Web and will remain there indefinitely.
- B. Employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech and/or language do not violate any laws, statutes, the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, and departmental policies, including the Standards of Conduct, as applicable.
- C. Such actions may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.



SUSAN BALLARD  
Chief of Police

Post on bulletin  
board for one week