



POLICY STATEMENT

Social Media

SU Policy Number: 404-430.0

ORIGINATING OFFICE

Department of Public Safety

PURPOSE

The Shippensburg University Police Department endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, community engagement, information distribution, and neighborhood safety. It also aids in streamlining processes within the Department and fosters productivity. This policy establishes the 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.

SCOPE

This policy is designed for Shippensburg University Police Department employees while performing their duties. The personal use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram and twitter etc. Offensive, demeaning or disruptive messages are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, messages that are inconsistent with the Universities policies concerning Equal Employment Opportunity and Sexual Harassment policies.

OBJECTIVE

To outline expectations and limitations of Shippensburg University Police Department employees without violating their ability to exercise their first amendment rights.

DEFINITIONS

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

EMPLOYEE: Any sworn or non-sworn employee, including volunteers. For the purposes of this social media policy, volunteers of the Shippensburg University Police Department will be held to the same standard of conduct as employees.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT: Any post that: 1. defames, abuses, harasses, stalks, threatens or violates the legal rights, of others;

1. Includes Racism, hatred, slander, threats, obscenity, violence, vulgarity including spam or advertisement's;
2. Could harm the safety or well-being of one of our employees, including personal attacks,;

3. Is off-topic;
4. Has personal information about another person or that violates persons privacy;
5. Includes copyrighted material that belongs to another person;
6. Contains links to inappropriate websites;

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

PAGE: The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

POST: Content an individual publishes online on a social media page or site. Content can be in the form of spoken words, stories, photographs, videos, images, or related forms of communication.

PROFILE: Informational description that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Social media refers to digital communication platforms that integrate user generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites, microblogging sites, photo and video sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and news sites. Some examples of social media include: • Facebook; • Twitter; • Instagram; • YouTube.

The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a specific site, does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

SOCIAL NETWORKS: Online platforms 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, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

WORLD WIDE WEB: A system of interlinked hypertext documents accessed via the internet. With a Web browser, one can view Web pages that may contain text, images, videos and other multimedia, and navigate between them via hyperlinks.

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

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".

POLICY

Social media provides a valuable means of assisting the Department and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, investigative, crime prevention, and related objectives. This policy identifies potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administrative and supervisory personnel. The Department also recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some Department personnel. The personal use of social media can have bearing on Department personnel in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature as well as some prohibitions on the use of social media by Department personnel.

PROCEDURES

PERSONAL USE:

1. Precautions and Prohibitions: Barring state law or binding employment contracts to the contrary, department personnel shall abide by the following when using social media.
 - a. Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this Department, impede

- the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the department.
- b. Department personnel will refrain from posting, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating any information or photographs that impair or jeopardize Department operations, operational security, officer safety, or open/on-going investigations.
 - c. As Shippensburg University employees, Department personnel are cautioned that speech on duty or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties—that is, that owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities—may form the basis for discipline. Department personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and this department.
 - d. Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their employment without written permission from the Chief of Police or designee.
 - e. When using social media, Department personnel will be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the Department’s code of conduct is required in the personal use of social media. In particular, Department personnel are prohibited from the following:
 - i. Speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or 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.
 - ii. Speech involving themselves or other department personnel reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.
 - f. Engaging in prohibited speech noted herein, may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer’s testimony in criminal proceedings.
2. Department personnel may not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this Department without express authorization.
 3. Department personnel should be aware that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is protected.
 4. Department personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the Department at any time without prior notice.
 5. Reporting violations: Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify his or her supervisor immediately for follow-up action.

DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZED USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

1. Media and Marketing personnel may authorize an employee to use social networks or social media sites for the purpose of promoting the Department’s mission and goals.
2. Any unit or employee receiving authorization to use social media sites to represent the Department shall be granted a site profile by personnel from media and marketing.
3. Department authorized social media sites shall, when practical:
 - a. Indicate that they are maintained by the University.
 - b. List Shippensburg University Police Department contact information prominently.
 - c. Include a disclaimer that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Department.
 - d. Include the URL that links back to the University’s official website. Additionally, the University’s official website shall include links to official Department social media sites.

4. Employees shall adhere to the following guidelines when using social media:
 - a. Employees authorized to use social media on behalf of the university shall conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Shippensburg University Police Department
 - b. Employees should be aware that their speech becomes a published record on the World Wide Web and is archived according to the laws of the state of Maryland. Department personnel shall adhere to all applicable policies, procedures and rules governing conduct when using social media.
 - c. Information posted on university authorized social media sites must be respectful, professional and truthful. Corrections must be issued when needed.
 - d. Non-compliance with the University's and/or Department's policies, guidelines, or procedures regarding social networking sites may result in the revocation of email and internet privileges and/or other appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension, or termination of employment.
 - e. This policy covers all usage of social networking sites regardless of the type of device used to access, including but not limited to mobile data computers, tablets, smart phones, etc.
 - f. Any official Department social media account that profiles an employee or group shall remain under the control of the Department in the event an employee leaves service.
 - g. All official Department social media sites shall adhere to style and content guidelines as determined by the Chief of Police or his designee.
 - h. Employees authorized to represent the Shippensburg University Police Department in social networking will be responsible for providing timely updates to the Department's social media sites by sending status updates of dispatched newsworthy calls and public events.
 - i. Officers should not take photographs of an evidentiary nature. Officers will not photograph
 - i. Specific items of evidence;
 - ii. Witnesses to crimes;
 - iii. Suspects;
 - iv. Or anything that, if posted immediately to social media, would provide information that would compromise an ongoing investigation including, but not limited to the location of officers on the perimeter of a barricaded person, or notes or documents related to an ongoing case;
 - j. Employees are encouraged to limit the use of Department equipment to official Department business, regardless of device-type.
 - k. Employees are encouraged to refrain from using personal equipment to conduct official business on behalf of the Shippensburg University Police Department.

RECISSION

APPROVALS

Executive Management Team; 2/26/2020

FILENAME:

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DATE:

2/26/2020

DISTRIBUTION:

Public