

Consolidated City of Jacksonville
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

GENERAL ORDER LXXVI.0 (76)

SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

RESCINDS: NEW

SCOPE: CPRS/3

EFFECTIVE DATE: 02-10-2012

The purpose of this Order is to establish a policy within the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office regarding the approved use, permissions, and appropriate utilization of social media. This order supports the Sheriff's Office Core Values of "Worthy of Trust," "Respect for Each Other," and "Always Improving."

This order consists of the following numbered articles:

- I. Policy**
- II. Definitions**
- III. Authorized Use and Users**
- IV. Personal/Off-Duty Usage**

I. POLICY

Social media provides a potentially valuable means of assisting the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, investigative, crime prevention and related objectives. The unauthorized or inappropriate personal use of social media should be outlined and defined for Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel, to prevent their violation of policy, which could result in disciplinary action.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Blog** - A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments. The term is short for "Web log."
- B. **Chat Room** - A website where users can actively send messages back and forth in a group setting. The term can mean any technology ranging from real-time online chat over instant messaging and online forums.
- C. **Forum** - An online discussion group where users can post comments and thoughts either anonymously or as themselves, usually not in real-time.

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- D. **Page** - The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
- E. **Post** - Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
- F. **Profile** - Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.
- G. **Social Media** - A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc.), micro-blogging sites (Twitter, Nile, etc.), photo and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube, etc.), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit, etc.).
- H. **Social Networks** - Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.
- I. **Speech** - Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

III. Official, Authorized On-Duty Use and Users

A. Authorized Users

- 1. Those authorized by the Sheriff to comment publicly; and those expressly allowed by a supervisor, in the discharge of his duty; and
- 2. Those whose job duties may require the use of social media in discharge of their duties.

B. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office-Sanctioned Use

If not working in an investigatory capacity, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel authorized to represent the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office via social media channels shall do the following:

- 1. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and shall adhere to all Jacksonville Sheriff's Office standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum;
- 2. Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning pending investigations and/or prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate

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confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to Jacksonville Sheriff's Office training, activities, or work-related assignments without expressed written permission from the Sheriff or designee; and

3. Not conduct political activities or private business.

C. Unauthorized Use

1. Agency personnel shall not use any JSO equipment or resources to engage in social media activities, unless expressly allowed by a supervisor in the discharge of official duties; and
2. ALL agency personnel shall not engage in personal social media activities while on duty.

IV. Personal/Off-Duty Usage

NOTE: Agency employees should be cognizant of the fact that they are responsible for, and may be held accountable for any and all conversations, chats, postings, etc. made by them relating to their employment, in accordance with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Code of Conduct- General Order XI.

- A. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair the work of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office; damage the reputation of another; disparage or embarrass the agency, its employees, or any of its business units or functions.
- B. As public employees, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel are cautioned that speech, on or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (re: Code of Conduct and applicable Code of Ethics).
- C. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office 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 Sheriff or his designee.
- D. When using social media, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain. Therefore, adherence to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office's Code of Conduct (General Order XI) is required in the personal use of social media. Further, Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel are particularly prohibited from the following:

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1. 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; and
 2. Opinions about any encounters with the public as a result of the member's job related function.
- E. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel may not divulge information gained by reason of their employment; make any statements, speeches, appearances, and endorsements; or publish materials that represent the views or positions of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office without the express authorization of the Sheriff or his designee. Members wishing to use social media to promote a message publicly about the sanctioned charitable, educational, prevention or intervention activities of the agency or its personnel, should consult with the Public Information Office so the appropriate message and chosen dissemination channel can be coordinated and approved.
- F. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel should be aware that they may be subject to liability and/or discipline for:
1. Publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization;
 2. Publishing or posting private facts and personal information about someone without their permission that has not been previously revealed to the public, is not of legitimate public concern, and would be offensive to a reasonable person;
 3. Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for any non-official purpose; or
 4. Publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
- G. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel should realize that privacy settings and social media sites are constantly in flux, and they should never assume that personal information posted on such sites is private.
- H. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel should know that any postings or communications on social networking sites that communicate, perpetuate, or formalize their official actions or the official actions of another may be considered public record under Florida law.
- I. Members should consider the possible adverse consequences of Internet postings, such as future employment, testifying in criminal cases, and public as well as private embarrassment to the member.

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- J. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office at any time without prior notice.
- K. Reporting violations—any member aware of or has knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify his supervisor immediately for follow-up action.
- L. Employees who are brought under administrative or internal investigation related to their performance, conduct, functionality or duties may be ordered to provide the agency, or its designated investigator, with access to the social media and/or social networking platforms in which they participate or maintain.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John H. Rutherford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "R".

John H. Rutherford
Sheriff