



| DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL                           |  |  |
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| CHAPTER 238   | DEPARTMENTAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA                                     |  |
|  | Effective: 10/31/2012  | Commissioner Approval:  |
|   | Authorities: <a href="#">SOA Information Security Policies</a> (ISP) |  |
|   | Applicability: ALL DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES                            |  |
|   | Special Instructions: See OPM Chapters 101 & 119                     |  |

### 238.100 INTRODUCTION

The department endorses the authorized on-duty use of social media to further the mission of protecting and serving the public. Public safety is essential to preserving the high quality of life Alaskans value and enjoy.

The department's goals with social media are to expand public safety education; to enable citizens to make safe choices for themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods; and to improve communication and interaction between citizens and the department.

This policy establishes the department's position on the utility and management of DPS social media pages and provides guidance on their administration and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one form of social media, but rather establishes a stable foundation from which to use social media as advances in technology occur and new tools emerge.

Personal use of social media by employees is addressed in OPM 101.

### 238.300 SOCIAL MEDIA USE

**A. Social Media Adoption.** The department recognizes the role of social media in society and that advances in technology require the department to adjust to its uses. The department encourages on-duty use of social media as it pertains to criminal and administrative investigations, sharing safety and training information with the public, recruiting new employees, and providing an avenue through which the public can communicate and interact with the department.

1. Department Social Media. Sites, pages, and profiles representing the department must be approved by the Commissioner's office.
2. Division Social Media. Division Directors may, with the approval of the Commissioner's office, authorize the creation of a division social media sites, pages, and profiles.
3. Creation of work-related Social Media. Employees may not create or administer a social media site, page, or profile that represents (or appears to represent) the State of Alaska, the department, or any division without written approval from the Commissioner's office and, where required, the Division Director.

**B. Authorized Moderators.** Certain employees shall be designated to manage social media and communicate on behalf of the department and/or division.

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1. The Public Information Office (PIO) is designated by the Commissioner to oversee and manage department social media and to communicate on behalf of the department.
2. Division Directors are responsible for identifying authorized moderator(s) at the division level.

**C. *Employee Users.*** If an employee identifies erroneous information displayed on a department or division social media page, the employee should notify the authorized moderator and provide the correct information. Employees shall not attempt to correct erroneous information by posting or commenting on the site.

**D. *DPS Representative Users.*** Certain employees may be authorized to comment on behalf of the department on a matter of public interest. Those employees must identify themselves by name and title when using social media. All other employees shall refrain from identifying themselves as DPS employees if they might appear to be speaking on behalf of the department.

**E. *Response to Public Inquiries.*** Authorized moderators are permitted to respond directly to public inquiries. When necessary, the authorized moderator may consult with subject matter experts within the department to craft responses to public inquiries. All posts and replies shall originate from the authorized moderator.

**F. *Use of Department Equipment.*** Employees are permitted to use department computers, smart phones, and similar devices for official department use of social media. See OPM 119.

**G. *Reports of Employee Conduct.*** Compliments or complaints regarding the professional duty or conduct of department employees will be treated like any other public input and shall be filed using the DPS intranet online reporting system to the Office of Professional Standards and/or the employee's supervisor for review.

### 238.310 CONTENT

**A. *Types of Content.*** Content posted on all social media pages shall be useful, relevant, and reliable. Responses to public inquiries shall be prompt and professional, yet personable. As a law enforcement agency, postings must be within the department's ethical and professional standards.

1. All speech must be a professional representation of the department. Authorized moderators must have a good understanding of community norms, sensitivities, expectations, and department policies regarding information release.

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2. Posting of an employee's personal information and/or photo must comply with the department's media and public records policies, emphasizing recognition of privacy and potential officer safety issues.
3. Content may originate from within the department such as public safety information, participation by department employees in community events, or news releases generated by the department; content may originate from outside sources as it relates to the department's mission and social media objectives.
4. Content may also include notices of community or current events that reinforce connections between the department and citizens of Alaska.

**B. *Inappropriate Content.*** Inappropriate content may not be posted to a department social media page. Employees posting inappropriate content to department social media pages will be subject to discipline. Any questions concerning whether or not certain content is appropriate shall be directed to the Commissioner's office prior to the material being posted.

Inappropriate content includes, but is not limited to, information that may:

- jeopardize officer safety or compromise an ongoing investigation,
- be considered content known as inside-access, which includes comments or opinions concerning on-going police operations,
- violate anyone's personal or medical privacy, or
- be illegal or otherwise prohibited by statute, regulation, or policy.

**C. *Page Monitoring.*** Social media pages must remain fresh and updated to be of value. Authorized moderators should monitor comments daily as time and resources allow. New content should be posted frequently as long as the content remains engaging and valuable.



### 238.900 DEFINITIONS

**Authorized Moderator** – Employee(s) appointed to manage, oversee, and communicate with the public using social media on behalf of the department and/or division. With some social media, this position is referred to as a site administrator.

**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.

**Social Media Page** – Any page or area within a social media website where content is displayed and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.

**Post** – Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

**Profile** – Information that a user provides about himself/herself on a social networking site.

**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 (i.e. Facebook, MySpace), micro-blogging sites (i.e. Twitter, Nixle), photo- and video-sharing sites (i.e. Flickr, YouTube), wikis (i.e. Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (i.e. Digg, Reddit).

**Social Media Site** – Online platform where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

**Speech** – Expression or communication in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, images, audio and/or video, or related forms of communication.