

**NEW HAVEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICE
GENERAL ORDERS**



GENERAL ORDER 4.16

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 16, 2016

SOCIAL MEDIA

4.16.01 PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the guidelines for the use of social media. The New Haven Department of Police Service endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange, streamline processes, and foster productivity.

4.16.02 POLICY

It is the policy of the New Haven Department of Police Service to establish the Department's position on the utility and management of social media and provide 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. Social media provides a new and potentially valuable means of assisting the Department and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, and 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 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 prohibitions on the use of social media by Department personnel.

4.16.03 DEFINITIONS

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.”

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 that an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on site.

PROFILE: Information that a user provides about himself or 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 (Facebook, MySpace), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo-and video-sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit).

SOCIAL NETWORKS: Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize 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.

SURFING: To navigate through the World Wide Web or Internet. The term also has a generic meaning of spending time on the Internet.

WIKI: Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

4.16.04 ON-THE-JOB USE

DEPARTMENT-SANCTIONED PRESENCE

- Determine Strategy
 - Where possible, each social media page shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and scope of the New Haven Department of Police Service’s presence on the website.
 - Where possible, the page(s) should link to the Department’s official website.
 - Social media page(s) shall be designed for the target audience(s) such as youth or potential police recruits.

- Procedures
 - All Department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee and shall be administered by a designee of the Chief.
 - Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Department and shall have Department contact information prominently displayed.
 - Where possible, social media pages should state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Department.
 - Pages shall clearly indicate that posted comments will be monitored and that the Department reserves the right to remove obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks.
 - Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
- Department-Sanctioned Use
 - Department personnel representing the Department via social media outlets shall do the following:
 - Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Department and accordingly, shall adhere to all Department standards of conduct and observe conventionally accepted protocols and proper decorum.
 - Identify themselves as a member of the Department.
 - Not make statements about guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning active investigations, pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information, including photographs or videos, related to Department training, activities, or work-related assignments without express permission.
 - Not conduct political activities or private business.
 - The use of Department computers by Department personnel to access social media is prohibited without authorization.
 - Department personnel use of personally owned devices to manage the Department's social media activities or in the course of official duties is prohibited without express written permission.

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

POTENTIAL USES

- Social media is a valuable investigative tool when seeking evidence or information about:
 - Missing persons.
 - Wanted persons.
 - Gang participation.
 - Crimes perpetrated online (i.e, cyberbullying, cyberstalking).
 - Photos or videos of a crime posted by a participant or observer.
- Social media can be used for community outreach and engagement by:
 - Providing crime prevention tips.
 - Offering online-reporting opportunities.
 - Sharing crime maps and data.
 - Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes (i.e Crimestoppers, text-a-tip).
- Social media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to:
 - Road closures.
 - Special events.
 - Weather emergencies.
 - Missing or endangered persons.
- Persons seeking employment and volunteer positions use the Internet to search for opportunities and social media can be a valuable recruiting mechanism.
- This Department has an obligation to include Internet-based content when conducting background investigations of job candidates.
- Search methods shall not involve techniques that are in violation of existing law.
- Vetting techniques shall be applied uniformly to all candidates.

4.16.05 PERSONAL USE

PRECAUTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS

- Absent relevant state laws, court decisions or binding employment contracts to the contrary, Department personnel shall abide by the following when using social media:

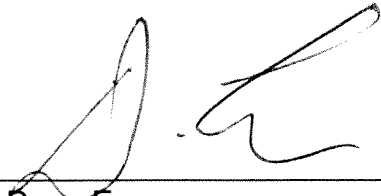
- Departmental personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of this Department for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Department.
- As public employees, Department personnel are cautioned that speech, on-or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties—that is, that owes its existence to the employee’s professional duties and responsibilities—may not be protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the Department. Departmental personnel should assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their office and this Department.
- Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate the following:
 - Any information to which they have access as a result of their employment without permission from the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
 - Any references to any other Department member’s employment by the Department without that person’s consent.
 - Any intellectual property of the Department or the City of New Haven without the specific authorization of the Chief of Police or his/her designee. Intellectual property includes but is not limited to badges, patches, logos, uniforms, official photographs, audio/video files, or any text documents (papers or electronic). The only exception will be photographs of official ceremonies of the Department such as promotions or award ceremonies.
- When using social media, Department personnel should 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 cautioned that the following could result in adverse employment consequences up to and including termination:
 - 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, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other protected class of individuals.
- Engaging in prohibited speech noted herein may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer’s testimony in criminal proceedings. Department personnel thus sanctioned are subject to discipline up to and including termination.

- 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 permission.
- Department personnel should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for:
 - Publishing or posting false information that harms the reputation of another person, group, or organization (defamation).
 - 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.
 - Using someone else's name, likeness, or other personal attributes without that person's permission for an exploitative purpose.
 - Publishing the creative work of another, trademarks, or certain confidential business information without the permission of the owner.
- 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.
- 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.
- Department personnel shall not post or blog during duty hours, unless such activity is for agency purposes.
- Department personnel shall not use agency email addresses to register for or to respond to social media sites, unless such activity is for agency purposes.
- Department personnel shall not knowingly or recklessly post false information about the New Haven Department of Police Service, superiors, co-workers, public officials or others who have a relationship with the agency.

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.

No enforcement action shall occur before 60 days after the effective date. The Department shall endeavor to post, disseminate, and train on this policy.



Dean Esserman
Chief of Police

6/16/2016

Date