

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE	NUMBER
	Dec. 30, 2012	10.14
	REVISED	TOTAL PAGES
	Dec. 30, 2019	3
Social Media		



## I. Introduction

- A. Social media provides valuable assistance to Division personnel with community outreach, conducting investigations, preventing crime, **and highlighting the actions and achievements of Division personnel.**
- B. The Division endorses the exchange of information via social media to enhance communication, encourage collaboration, and foster productivity. This policy establishes the Division's position on the management of social media while providing guidance on its administration. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general, as technology changes.
- C. The Division recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some Division personnel. The personal use of social media can have bearing on Division personnel in their official capacity. This policy provides prohibitions on the use of social media by Division personnel.
- D. Division personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not:
  1. Impair working relationships within the Division or the City of Columbus;
  2. Impede or interfere with their own **job requirements** or that of another Division employee; **or**
  3. Violate any **Division** Rule of Conduct, Policy, Directive or **applicable City Policy.**

## II. Definitions

### A. Page

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

### B. Post

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

### C. 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, microblogging sites, photo and video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and news sites.

## D. Speech

Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words; in writing; **or** by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, video, or related forms of communication.

## III. Policy Statements

### A. On-Duty Use Representing the Division

1. For Division purposes, all social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police or his or her designee and shall be administered by the assigned bureau commander/**manager** or his or her designee.
  - a. Social media pages shall clearly indicate **that** they are maintained by the Division and shall have Division contact information prominently displayed.
  - b. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology policies.
2. Social media pages shall state that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the Division.
  - a. Pages shall clearly indicate that posted content will be monitored and that the Division reserves the right to remove any content for reasons including, but not limited to, comments that contain obscenities, off-topic comments, and personal attacks.
  - b. Pages shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure.
3. Personnel representing the Division via social media outlets shall identify themselves as a member of the Division.
4. Division personnel shall observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to social media.
5. Personnel representing the Division via social media outlets shall not conduct private business on the social media site.

### B. Personal Use

1. **Division** personnel shall not post pictures or otherwise identify other Division personnel assigned to covert assignments if the posting could identify the covert personnel as an officer.
2. Division personnel shall not engage in speech which may undermine or impeach a Division employee's testimony in criminal proceedings.
3. **Division personnel shall not post information or pictures from crime scenes or calls for service that may be considered evidence and in violation of the "Property and Evidence Handling" directive.**
4. **Division personnel shall not be obligated to interact with any other Division personnel, to include supervisors, on any social media platform.**

***C. Division supervisors should not investigate or conduct targeted searches of their subordinates' social media sites without provocation from a specific claim or complaint or without permission from their chain of command.***