

I. Purpose:

Members of the Hedwig Village Police Department are held to a higher standard than general members of the public. As such, we are held accountable to heightened scrutiny given the sensitive nature of the duties we are called on to perform. Our online computer and cellular activity should, at all times, reflect such professional expectations and standards set forth by this department which is held by the public trust. The purpose of this General Order is to establish procedures for the responsible use of social media and social networking sites.

II. Definitions:

Social media and social networking may be defined as a variety of online internet-based applications and / or sources that allow people to communicate, share information, share photos, videos, audio and exchange text or other multimedia files with others via some form of user generated content online or a cellular network platform. Examples of social media or social networks include, but are not limited to, the following internet or mobile formats such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, online forums, message boards or bulletin boards, blogs, and other similarly developed formats which allow for the posting, broadcasting, transmitting, or sharing of text and images with one or more users.

III. General Rules for the Use of Social Media / Social Networking Sites:

Employees who choose to maintain or participate in social media or social networking platforms while on or off duty shall conduct themselves with professionalism and in such a manner that will not reflect negatively upon the department or its mission and values. In particular, employees are prohibited from posting, broadcasting, transmitting, or sharing of text, audio and / or video images, or any other multimedia file with one or more of the following:

- a. Material which is offensive, harassing, intimidating, disparaging, obscene, unethical, defamatory, or threatening in nature.
- b. Recordings, including images, obtained while they or another are engaged in performance of enforcement activities, tactical situations, training activities, or in any situation that may have an adverse effect upon the agency.
- c. Identifying information of officers who are or who may reasonably be expected to work undercover operations. Employees shall not post any form of visual or personal identification that would reasonably allow another to identify an employee as an undercover police officer or member of this department.

- d. Any investigation, both current and past, or any past or current administrative action of this department. Release of department information, files, reports, images may only be authorized by the expressed written permission from the chief of police or his / her designee.
- e. For safety and security reasons, employees shall not post any information pertaining to the identity of another member of the department without the employees' permission and the expressed [verbal or written] consent of the chief of police.
- f. Employees are reminded to exercise good judgment and demonstrate personal accountability when disclosing their own employment with this department. As such, employees are prohibited from the following without the expressed [verbal or written] consent of the chief of police:
 - 1. Displaying and / or posing departmental likenesses or images of departmental logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked or unmarked vehicles or similar identifying items that specifically identifies the Hedwig Village Police Department.
 - 2. Displaying and / or posting personal photographs or providing similar means of personal recognition that may cause them to be identified as a police officer for the department.

IV. Employee Responsibility:

Employees are reminded that the internet may only be accessed to further city business. Employees are prohibited from using a city owned computer with the exception of General Order PE.05: Computers, Section V. Use of the Internet, *E-mail* when using social media.

Employees are reminded that when using personal equipment for social media, their statements, activities, and images become part of the worldwide electronic domain, regardless of the privacy filters or proprietary site settings. Speech, whether on or off-duty, made pursuant to ones official duties or that owes its existence to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities, is not protected speech under the First Amendment. Such speech and usage, if harmful, may be the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the department. Employees will adhere to the following guidelines and are expressly prohibited from:

- a. Posting any material on the internet that brings discredit to or may adversely affect the efficiency or integrity of the department.
- b. Tarnishing the department's reputation or the good reputation of another.
- c. Diminishing the public's trust and / or confidence in the department or its employees.

- d. Causing any action that negatively reflects upon one's status as a public servant or member of this department.
- e. Accessing social media and social networking sites via personal use equipment, which interferes with an employee's assigned job duties.

Employees, specifically peace officers, must be mindful that any statement or conduct that calls into question one's credibility as a witness may be used at trial to either impeach testimony or to cause one to be excluded from testifying. [Brady v. Maryland, 373 U.S. 83 (1963); Giglio v. United States, 405 U.S. 150 (1972)].

V. Administrative Responsibility:

At the discretion of the chief of police, all employees brought under administrative or internal investigation related to their performance, functionality and / or duties as police officers or civilian members may be ordered to provide the department, or its designated investigator with access to the social media and social networking platforms in which they maintain and / or participate.

C.N. Leonard
Assistant Chief of Police

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