



Minneapolis Police Department Policy and Procedure Manual

Number:
5-100

Volume Five – Code of Conduct and Use of Force

Code of Conduct

5-108 Social Media Sites (12/15/09) (05/24/13) (09/20/21) (09/26/22)

I. Purpose

To establish policy regarding employee use of social media sites.

II. Definitions

Content: Any posts, writings, material, documents, photographs, graphics, videos, links, or other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted via social media.

Social Media Site: An internet site or application where users create and share content and participate in online communities and conversations, in the form of a page, profile, account, group or other presence. These include, but are not limited to, blogs, forums, chat sites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, Reddit, and YouTube. This policy includes emerging new web-based platforms generally regarded as social media or having many of the same functions as those listed.

Covert Social Media Profile: A social media site profile created and maintained by an MPD employee, but in a username not associated with the MPD employee, for the purpose of investigating criminal activity.

III. Policy

The MPD has a duty to protect the reputation of the organization and its employees, as well as guard against liability and potential legal risk. Therefore, employees are advised of the following:

- A. Employees should exercise caution and good judgment when engaging with social media sites. Employees should be aware that the content of these social media sites can be subpoenaed and used in criminal and civil trials to impeach the employee's testimony.
- A. When engaging with social media sites, employees are subject to all pertinent City of Minneapolis ("City") policies, MPD policies, and local, state, and federal laws regarding public information on arrests, investigations, and personnel data.
- B. This policy supplements the City's Electronic Communications Policy and Social Media Policy.

IV. Procedure/Regulations

A. Requirements

Failure to comply with the following may result in discipline, up to and including discharge:

1. This MPD policy on social media sites.
2. The requirements of the City's Social Media Policy and its procedures.
3. Provisions of the City's Social Media Policy's Procedures related to personal use of social media sites.

This includes, but is not limited to, the following clauses:

a. Clause 2

Employees must not use personal Social Media Sites to originate Content as an official form of communication, to speak on behalf of the City, to indicate they are representing the interests of the City, or in a way that could be perceived as official City communication. Always consider how something may be interpreted or understood before posting.

b. Clause 4

The City expects employees to be truthful, courteous, and respectful toward supervisors, co-workers, City residents, customers, and other persons or entities associated with or doing business with the City. When an employee can be identified as someone who does work for the City, they must not engage in name-calling or personal attacks or other such demeaning behavior if the conduct would adversely affect their duties or City workplace. This Section and its limitations apply when the action of the employee adversely affects their work, job duties or ability to function in their position or creates a hostile work environment.

c. Clause 7:

If an employee chooses to identify themselves as someone who does work on behalf of the City on a personal Social Media Site or on a Social Media Site that is not a City-Supported Social Media Site, and posts a personal opinion on a matter related to City business, a disclaimer that is similar to the following must be used:

“These are my own opinions and do not represent those of the City of Minneapolis.”

d. Clause 9:

- i. There may be times when personal use of Social Media Sites that are not City-Supported Social Media Sites (even if it is off-duty or using their own equipment)

may affect or impact the workplace and become the basis for coaching or discipline.

Examples of situations where this might occur include, but are not limited to:

- Cyber-bullying, stalking or harassment.
 - Participating in offensive, hateful conduct.
 - When conduct on personal Social Media could be perceived as a conflict with the City’s mission, values, or degrades public trust in the City or its department.
 - Release of City data that is not public.
 - Unlawful activities.
 - Inappropriate use of the City’s name, logo, website URL, or the position or title of an employee or of someone who performs services for the City.
 - Using City-owned equipment or City-time for more than occasional personal use on Social Media Sites that are not City-Supported Social Media Sites, which interferes with one’s ability to do their job.
 - Violation of law, whether federal, state, or local, or violation of a City policy.
- ii. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because the laws in this area are evolving.

B. Authorized City-supported use

Certain MPD employees may be authorized to use social media sites for MPD-approved public relations and official investigative or work-related purposes. Such use must be approved by Police Administration.

C. Covert use of social media sites

The MPD recognizes that the use of covert social media profiles can be a useful tool in the investigation of criminal activity.

1. Profile registration

- a. All covert social media profiles shall be registered with the Commander who oversees the Strategic Information Center (SIC). The information provided shall include:
- The name & web address of the social media site
 - The username and screen name of the covert social media profile, and
 - The MPD employee responsible for maintaining the covert social media profile.
- b. The Commander or their designee shall conduct yearly audits to ensure that the covert profiles are still active.

- c. When a covert social media profile is no longer needed it shall be deactivated or deleted from the social media site, to the extent permitted by the social media site, and the Commander shall be notified.
- 2. Employee responsibility
 - a. The MPD employee registered as the maintainer of a covert social media profile is responsible for all content posted online under that profile.
 - a. The employee shall maintain their own covert social media profile, and shall not share the access information with other employees, except that:
 - i. The employee shall provide the password to their registered profile upon request from the Commander or their designee or for auditing purposes.
- 3. No promotion of violence or criminal activity

MPD employees shall not post any information through a covert social media profile that promotes violence or criminal activity.