



ATTLEBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy and Procedure

	Social Media	
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5.12.0 Social Media

5.12.0.1 Overview

The Attleboro Police Department endorses the secure use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy establishes this department's position on the utility and management of social media and provides guidance on its management, administration, and oversight. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, but rather social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

5.12.0.2 Policy

It is the policy of this Department that employees:

- ***Shall not***, intentionally or unintentionally, bring discredit upon themselves or this agency through electronic devices and/or social media.
- ***Shall not*** use electronic devices or social media to violate the policies, procedures, rules, or regulations of this agency.
- ***Shall not*** disclose unauthorized or confidential information and/or materials using electronic devices or social media.

5.12.0.3 On-Duty Employees

Whereby all employees, while on-duty shall devote their full time and attention to the service of the Attleboro Police Department and to the citizens of the community, all employees are restricted from accessing any social networking or social media sites while on-duty in any capacity, unless expressly authorized by the Chief of Police. This includes civilian employees.

5.12.1 Contents

5.12.1.1 Contents

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5.12.2 Definitions

5.12.2.1 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.”
5.12.2.2 Chat	Digital text communications between two or more persons. The text is generally posted in chronological order sent for all of the participants to read.
5.12.2.3 Electronic Devices	Cellular telephones, I pads, digital cameras, mobile computers, mini-computers, desktop computers, and other devices used to store or transfer data, live audio or video, location or other information.
5.12.2.4 Forum	Discussion areas on web sites where people can post messages and make comments. Some forums allow users to upload images, audio, video and other files.
5.12.2.5 Friends	On social networking sites, friends are individuals or organizations that you authorize to view the materials that you and others post to your site, and may allow you to view the materials posted on their site.
5.12.2.6 Page	The specific portion of a social media website where content is displayed, and managed by an individual or individuals with administrator rights.
5.12.2.7 Peer to Peer	The connection of two or more individuals or organizations through a network. It is often associated with file sharing.
5.12.2.8 Post	Content an individual shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.
5.12.2.9 Profile	Information, images audio and/or video that a person or organization provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.
5.12.2.10 Public Domain	Materials or access available to the public without any special permission or access.

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5.12.2 Definitions, Continued

**5.12.2.11
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, Snap-chat), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo- and videosharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs, and news sites (Digg, Reddit),etc.

**5.12.2.12
Social
Networking** Online platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

**5.12.2.13
Speech** Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

**5.12.2.14
Web 2.0** The second generation of the World Wide Web focused on shareable, user-generated content, rather than static web pages. Some use this term interchangeably with social media.

**5.12.2.15
Wiki** Web page(s) that can be edited collaboratively.

5.12.3 Official Department Social Media Sites

5.12.3.1 Authorization All official department social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police and shall be administered by authorized personnel or as otherwise determined by the Chief of Police.

No employee shall create, maintain, or contribute to any social media site representing the Attleboro Police Department or themselves as a member of Department, unless authorized by the Chief of Police, or his designee.

5.12.3.2 Profiles Specific authorization must be obtained for each site and each profile. Official sites and profiles must be presented in a professional and honorable manner which does not discredit the City of Attleboro, the Attleboro Police Department, the Attleboro Police Department mission, values or any employee.

5.12.3.3 Content Department social media sites and content will be reviewed for compliance with this policy. Content which, in the opinion of the Chief of Police or his designee, is not in compliance with department policy or is inappropriate may be ordered removed. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.

5.12.3.4 Department Personnel Department personnel representing the department via social media outlets shall:

1. 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.
2. Identify themselves as a member of the department.
3. Not conduct political activities or private business.

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5.12.3 Official Department Social Media Sites, Continued

5.12.3.5 Confidential Information

Confidential information shall not be posted unless authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee.

5.12.3.6 Opinions

Statements made by employees on department sanctioned sites shall represent those of the agency and not personal opinions.

- Individual writers may state opinion when promoting the Attleboro Police Department services, such as relating personal experiences when receiving such services.
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5.12.3.7 Prohibited Conduct

The following are strictly prohibited and shall not be posted on department sanctioned sites:

- Discrimination (race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, etc.)
 - Obscene materials
 - Harassment, including sexual harassment
 - Infringement of copyrighted material
 - Conducting of personal business, outside business, or promotion of private businesses
 - Expression of any political party or candidate
 - Conducting any Union activities (this prohibition does not include the Attleboro Police Association website or personal employee we sites).
 - Statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning 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 written permission of the Chief of Police.
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5.12.4 Department Sanctioned Social Media Investigations

5.12.4.1 Policy No employee shall create, maintain, or contribute to any social media site for investigative purposes, unless authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee.

5.12.4.2 Sites Specific authorization must be obtained for each site or profile.

5.12.4.3 Equipment Only Attleboro Police Department equipment (computer, cellular phones, etc) may be used in any social media investigation.

- Employees ***shall not*** use personal equipment or devices when visiting pornographic or sexual sites for official investigations.
- Such equipment must be set up so as to have no on-line identifiers to the department's network or otherwise be identifiable as law enforcement.
- Equipment should not be connected to the department network, if possible.

5.12.4.4 False Identities and Profiles The use of false identities for investigative purposes must be authorized by the Chief of Police or his designee. The details of the false identities and profiles must be:

- Documented;
- Approved by the detective division commander prior to use;
- Treated as confidential; and
- Understand the terms of service agreements for the applicable social network.

5.12.4.5 Review of Conduct Employees conducting on-line undercover investigations will meet periodically with the Detective Division Commander to review the conduct of the investigation. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the investigator is following agency policy and procedures and to protect the employee from later claims of secrecy and investigational misconduct.

5.12.5 Employee Personal Social Media

5.12.5.1

General Information

The Attleboro Police Department is a para-military organization.

As public employees, department personnel are cautioned that speech on or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties which owes its existence to the employee's professional duties and responsibilities, is not protected speech under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the department.

Department personnel shall assume that their speech and related activity on social media sites will reflect upon their official office and this department.

5.12.5.2

Employee Social Media

The Attleboro Police Department has a legitimate interest in preserving the public's trust and respect. Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech:

1. does not hinder the effectiveness or efficiency of department operations
 2. does not bring discredit upon the police department
 3. does not violate any department policy, rule or regulation
 4. does not violate the department's standards of conduct
 5. does not impede the performance of duties
 6. does not affect the employee's ability to perform his or her job
 7. does not result in poor job performance
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5.12.5.3

Conduct Unbecoming

Employees shall be aware that prohibited conduct, on or off duty, and the disciplinary offense of "conduct unbecoming" applies to social networking, blogging, chats and other on-line activities as well.

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5.12.5 Employee Personal Social Media, Continued

5.12.5.4 Conduct Unbecoming (continued)

Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their employment without written permission from the Chief of Police or his or her designee. In particular, department personnel are prohibited from the following:

- Department personnel may not post any 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, any religion, or any protected class of individuals;
- Department personnel may not disclose any confidential law enforcement missions (search warrants, warrant sweeps, investigations, etc.);
- Department personnel may not divulge or post any Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I.) or other protected information;
- Department personnel may not identify covert employees of other law enforcement agencies (local, state, or federal) as law enforcement employees;
- Department personnel may not identify informants, victims, suspects, or witnesses to any crime or investigation to which this department is affiliated;
- Department personnel may not post sexually graphic and/or explicit materials of any kind, including nude or sexually suggestive images of the themselves or others;
- Department personnel may not post disparaging remarks or materials targeting the Attleboro Police Department or Department employees or their family members;
- Department personnel may not harass another person via social media;
- Department personnel may not make a threat against the President of the United States;
- Department personnel may not make comments regarding personal drunkenness, drug use and/or heavy alcohol use;
- Department personnel may not divulge or post any information gained by reason of their authority, including but not limited to police reports, arrest reports, or any other official document or record;

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5.12.5 Employee Personal Social Media, Continued

5.12.5.4

Conduct Unbecoming (continued)

- Department personnel may not publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views or positions of this department without express authorization of the Chief of Police;
 - Department personnel may not disclose unauthorized or confidential information;
 - Department personnel may not post, transmit and disseminate any pictures or videos of official department training activities or work-related assignments, except official ceremonies, unless expressly authorized by the Chief of Police.
 - Employees are prohibited from using their title/position in any private correspondence, whether electronic or hard copied. This includes, but not limited to signature lines in a personal e-mail or social media account, unless expressly authorized by the Chief of Police.
 - Employees are prohibited from using Department titles, logos, emblems, uniforms, vehicles, patches and other material to create letterhead or similar material for personal reasons, unless expressly authorized by the Chief of Police.
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5.12.5.5

Violations of Prohibited Conduct

Department personnel sanctioned under this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination of office.

5.12.5.6

Public Information

Department personnel should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the public, defense attorney's, media, or the department at any time without prior notice.

Engaging in prohibited speech noted herein, may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer's testimony in criminal or civil proceedings.

5.12.5.7

Reporting Violations

Any superior officer who becomes aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any social media, website or web page in violation of the provision of this policy shall notify the Chief of Police immediately in writing.
