



**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania**

**Policy 5-08**

**Policy Title:** Use of Social Media

**Date of Issue:** December 1, 2022

**Rescinds:** None

**By Authority of:**

**Chief of Police**

**I. Purpose**

The Springfield Township Police Department endorses the responsible use of social media to: enhance communications, collaboration, and information exchange; streamline processes; and foster productivity. This policy establishes the department's position on the use 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; rather, it is meant to address social media in general, as advances in technology will occur and new tools will emerge.

**II. Policy**

Social media provides a new and potentially valuable means of assisting the department and its personnel in meeting community outreach, problem-solving, 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 that these tools play in the personal lives of some department personnel. The personal use of social media can have bearing on departmental 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.

**III. Department Social Media Sites**

- A. All department-maintained social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief of Police and administered and managed by department personnel designated by the Chief of Police, or his designee.
- B. Only information that has been approved by the Chief of Police shall be posted on a department-maintained social media site. Booking photos may not be posted unless

specifically authorized by the Chief of Police. Special care should be taken when posting suspect photos so as not to wrongly accuse innocent parties.

1. Information contained in a department news release is approved by the Chief of Police prior to dissemination; therefore, that information may be utilized.
- C. Where possible, department-maintained social media pages shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the department and shall have department contact information prominently displayed.
- D. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology and records management policies.
  - a. Content is subject to public records laws. Relevant records retention schedules apply to social media content.
  - b. Content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to comply with appropriate laws, policies, and regulations.

#### **IV. Personal Use of Social Media**

- A. Employees shall not access their personal web pages, social media, or other types of internet postings while on-duty unless such access is work-related, or with the approval of the Chief of Police.
- B. For safety and security reasons, department personnel shall not disclose their employment with the department nor shall they post information pertaining to the employment of any other member of the department without approval of the Chief of Police.
- C. Agency uniforms, badges, patches, vehicles, or photographs or depictions of these items, shall not be used on an employee's social media site or web posting without the approval of the Chief of Police.
- D. Web pages or other types of internet postings deemed inappropriate, whether an employment association or not, which brings discredit to the department and / or its employees, or which promotes misconduct either on or off-duty, may be investigated in accordance with department policies.
- E. Employees should consider the possibility of adverse consequences of internet postings, such as future employment, cross-examination in criminal and civil cases, and public as well as private embarrassment.

#### **V. Reporting Violations**

Any employee becoming aware of, or having knowledge of, a posting and / or website in violation of this policy shall immediately notify a supervisor for follow-up action.

