

**ILLINOIS STATE POLICE  
SRV-222, SOCIAL NETWORKING/MEDIA GUIDELINES**

<b>RESCINDS:</b> SRV-222, 2012-024, revised 04-11-2014.	<b>REVISED:</b> 05-15-2015 <b>2015-048</b>
<b>RELATED DOCUMENTS:</b> SRV-200 through SRV-221	<b>RELATED CALEA STANDARDS:</b> None

**I. POLICY**

The Illinois State Police (ISP):

- I.A. Endorses the secure use of social media and its role in providing an advanced and potentially valuable resource in assisting the ISP in meeting community outreach, investigations, crime prevention, and other ISP initiatives.
- I.B. Will apply all existing laws, rules, regulations, directives, and appropriate collective bargaining agreements that govern on- and off-duty conduct in the use of social networking media.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

- II.A. Department authorized use of social media - the engagement of such instrument for the specific purpose of assisting the ISP and employees in community outreach, problem-solving, investigations, crime prevention, and other ISP initiatives.
- II.B. Personal use of social media – the engagement or participation in any personal social networking platform, including but not limited to, personally owned sites, the sites of others (both known and unknown to the Department employee), news media pages, professional sites unaffiliated with the ISP, or other information exchange forums.
- II.C. Social media - on-line sources that allow people to communicate, share, and/or exchange information with others via some form of on-line or cellular network platform.
- II.D. Social networking - involves using such Internet or mobile formats to communicate with others using the same groups while also networking with other users based upon similar interests, geographical location, skills, occupation, ideology, beliefs, etc.
- II.E. Social networking websites – any computer network sites that focus on building online communities of people who share interests and activities and/or exploring the interests and activities of others. Examples of social networking websites include but are not limited to: Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and sites that allow users to post personal blogs.

**III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- III.A. The Department and appropriate supervisors will ensure ISP employees provide the appropriate and legal dissemination of information to the public via social media under the guidelines of statute and ISP policy.
- III.B. Employees seeking to represent the Department via social media outlets shall obtain express permission from the Director, or his/her designee, prior to engaging in such activity.
- III.C. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will:
  - III.C.1. Oversee and facilitate all public information shared via multiple social media outlets at the Department and various district/division levels.
  - III.C.2. Evaluate all requests and verify the authority of ISP employees to use social media sites.
  - III.C.3. Provide training for Department social media users to ensure a thorough understanding of the Department's policy on social media. Training will be provided to any applicable employee prior to authorizing the employee to use social media on behalf of the Department.

- III.C.4. Working with and assisting District Safety Education Officers (SEOs), and others tasked with supporting Departmental social media outlets, to gather and share information at a statewide level.

IV. PROCEDURES

IV.A. Department authorized use of social networking/media

IV.A.1. Department use of social media:

IV.A.1.a. When authorized to engage in social networking, Department employees shall:

- IV.A.1.a.1) Identify themselves as an employee of the ISP by full name, title/rank, and district/work assignment.

**NOTE:** Any employee who may reasonably be expected to work in an undercover capacity should not post any form of visual or personal identification. If there is any risk to officer safety or if identification may impede the progress of a criminal investigation, employees, with the permission of the Director, or his/her designee, may exclude such information.

- IV.A.1.a.2) Observe any and all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to social media.

- IV.A.1.a.3) Abide by all state of Illinois information systems policies, including, but not limited to, internet use and access and electronic mail and messaging.

- IV.A.1.a.4) At all times engage in ethical conduct, conduct themselves as representatives of the Department, and abide by all Department policies and standards of conduct.

IV.A.1.b. When engaging in authorized use of social media, Department employees shall not:

- IV.A.1.b.1) Make any statements or predictions about the guilt or innocence of any suspect(s) or arrestee(s), or comment concerning pending prosecutions.

- IV.A.1.b.2) Post, share, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information including photographs or videos related to department training, activities, investigations, or any other work-related assignment, without specific and express written permission from the Director, or his/her designee.

**NOTE:** See paragraph III.C.2. that provides that the PIO is responsible for verifying the authorization for on-duty use of social media sites by ISP employees.

- IV.A.1.b.3) Conduct political activities or private business.

- IV.A.1.b.4) Post images of Department employees who reasonably may be expected to work in an undercover capacity or identifying such persons as law enforcement officers.

IV.B. Personal use of social networking/media

- IV.B.1. Department employees who are off-duty and using privately-owned property to engage in the personal use of social media, shall not represent the state of Illinois, the ISP, or any official position maintained by either entity. Under such conditions, Department employees shall represent only themselves and their personal interests.

- IV.B.2. The following provisions shall apply to personal use of social media while off-duty and using privately-owned property.

- IV.B.2.a. Department employees shall not use their rank, title, or position in a manner that would suggest that they are representing the interests or official position of the Department.
- IV.B.2.b. Department employees shall not post any depiction or illustrations of the official seal of the state of Illinois, the ISP name, or Department-issued equipment; or use any Illinois or ISP property (on- or off-duty) to engage in personal use of social media.

**NOTE:** For the purpose of this directive, state and Department property includes, but is not limited to: desk-top computers, lap-top computers, cell phones, hand-held digital or electronic devices, and digital storage media.

IV.B.2.b.1) While engaging in personal use of social media, Department employees shall not post text, photographs, audio, video, illustrations, or any other multimedia file related to, or depicting, any of the following:

- IV.B.2.b.1)a) A current or pending department investigation, or a closed department investigation with respect to which the Department has not authorized disclosure or released as public record.
- IV.B.2.b.1)b) Criminal or civil proceeding pertaining to or arising from any matter involving the Department, including allegations of misconduct.

IV.C. Employees are prohibited from posting any image or statement related to the Department or its employees that is untruthful, or jeopardizes safety, or that discriminates or implies discrimination against any person or groups based on age, ancestry, belief, race, creed, disability, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

IV.D. Personnel found violating the provisions of this directive may face discipline up to, and including, termination in accordance with ISP directives PER-030, "Complaint and Disciplinary Investigations," PER-103, "Code Employee Disciplinary Rules," and ROC-002, "Rules of Conduct."

| Indicates new or revised items.

**-End of Directive-**