

TOWNSHIP OF BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT				
VOLUME: 1	CHAPTER: 11	# OF PAGES: 3	REVISION DATE	PAGE #
SUBJECT: ELECTRONIC SOCIAL NETWORKING				
EFFECTIVE DATE: 05/01/2015		ACCREDITATION STANDARDS: 1.4.1		
BY THE ORDER OF: Chief Karin DiMichele				

PURPOSE The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to provide guidance to the employees of the Berkeley Township Police Department concerning their personal web pages, websites and other electronic social networking sites.

POLICY While employees have a right to maintain personal web pages and websites, their status as members of the Berkeley Township Police Department requires that the content of those web pages and websites not be in violation of existing agency rules, regulations, policy, procedures, directives or create a potential conflict of interest. The Chief of Police reserves the right to restrict an employee's involvement in electronic social networking sites for the good of the agency.

PROCEDURES

I. General

- A. Personal web pages or websites include, but are not limited to Facebook®, MySpace®, YouTube®, Twitter®, LinkedIn®, other social networking sites, etc.
- B. Employees have the potential to be called as a witness in court proceedings related to their employment as a member of this agency. Credibility and character are subject to challenge and potential impeachment based upon the nature of postings on personal web pages, websites and other electronic social networking sites from any time, past or present and the person(s) or organization(s) with whom the employee networks.
- C. Employees shall be cognizant of the potential adverse consequences of internet postings and networking such as their credibility during cross-examination in court, future employment, current and future assignments, and possible embarrassment in the media.
- D. Employees must be aware that networking with Judges, attorneys, court personnel, or other members of the Judiciary or defense attorneys may result in adverse consequences to the operation of the Berkeley Township Police Department when prosecuting or attempting to prosecute criminal and civil matters. Examples of such consequences include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Having to change prosecution venues if a conflict of interest is alleged;
 - 2. Rendering testimony of investigative personnel inadmissible or impeachable due to alleged conflicts of interest due to electronic personal relationships;
 - 3. An increase in successful appeals due to perceived conflicts of interest.
- E. Conduct both on and off duty is subject to the rules and regulations of this agency. Any activity that brings discredit to the Berkeley Township Police Department and of an employee's status as an employee of this agency is prohibited.
- F. Employees shall not express personal opinion as official agency policy or position.
- G. Any item, object, material, or account that could be used or misconstrued as official agency sanctioned property or position shall not be used or depicted on any personal Internet posting without the express written permission of the Chief of Police.

1. These items, objects, or materials include, but are not limited to: photographs, images, reproductions or other depictions or accounts of badges, patches, equipment, weapons, marked or unmarked units, specialty vehicles, buildings, reports, evidence, crime or crash scenes, dead or injured animals, etc.
 2. Internet posting also includes accounts of agency activity or investigations (criminal, civil or administrative) on Twitter® or similar electronic networking site.
- H. Employees shall not display or post any image or comment involving a reference concerning any form of bias, hatred, or derogatory comments about any protected class of persons.
- I. Employees shall not use any form of social media so as to harass or intimidate another
- J. Employees shall not assume the identity of another or an identity that could be assumed to be a factual while posting any comments.
- K. Employees are prohibited from posting to or accessing personal web pages, websites and electronic social networking sites while working, except in the performance of official duties.
- L. Employees are prohibited from posting to or accessing personal web pages or websites from township computers or electronic devices, except in the performance of official duties.

II. APPROVAL PROCESS

- A. Any employee seeking approval to use any item, object, or material described above on a personal webpage or site shall:
1. Submit a request for approval to the Chief of Police.
 2. Describe the proposed reference to the agency and purpose.
 3. Provide a list of media to be used on the web page.
 4. Provide a printed layout of the material that is the subject of the request.
- B. The Chief of Police will approve or deny the request based upon the merits of the request and its compliance with existing agency policy or directives.