

CHAPTER 8 – SOCIAL NETWORKING

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CHAPTER 8 – SOCIAL NETWORKING

Section 8.00 - POLICY

Social media is a tool that is used in both personal and business related functions, that is used to share information. Employees are expected to maintain professionalism and uphold the integrity of the Raymore Police Department (RPD) when representing the department on social media pages or personally when accessing and engaging in social networking sites.

Section 8.01 - BACKGROUND

Social media provides a valuable means of assisting the RPD and its personnel with meeting departmental goals and objectives.

The department recognizes the role that social media has in the lives of our citizens and employees. However, the personal use of social media can have an impact on departmental personnel in their official capacity.

The RPD has a duty to protect the reputation of the organization and its employees, as well as guard against liability and potential legal risk. The same principles and guidelines on conduct found in the policies of the City of Raymore apply to online activities.

Section 8.02 - DEFINITIONS

- A. Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments.
- B. Employee: A police officer, civilian, or reserve officer of the RPD.
- C. Internet: A worldwide network of interconnected computer networks on which end-user services, such as World Wide Web sites or data archives, are located, enabling data and other information to be exchanged. The Internet includes commercial, educational, governmental, and other networks, all use the same set of communications protocols.
- D. Profile: Informational description that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.
- F. Post: Content an individual publishes online on a social media page or the act of publishing content on a social media site. Content can be in the form of spoken words, stories, photographs, videos, images, or related forms of communication.
- G. Social Media: A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content with user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (i.e., Facebook, MySpace), micro-blogging sites (i.e., Twitter), photo and video sharing sites (i.e., Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest), wikis (i.e., Wikipedia),

web-blogs, bulletin boards/message boards, and news sites (i.e., Nixle, Google News, Yahoo Groups, Reddit).

H. Social Networks: Online platforms where a user can create a profile, post information, and communicate with others using a range of technologies.

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

J. Uniform Resource Locator (URL): A specific site that constitutes a reference to an Internet resource. A URL is also commonly called the “web address”.

K. World Wide Web: A system of interlinked documents accessed via the internet. With a web browser, one can view a web page that may contain text, images, videos and other multimedia, and navigate between them via hyperlinks.

L. Website: Published page(s) on the World Wide Web, usually containing hyperlinks and published by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization.

Section 8.03 - DEPARTMENT-AUTHORIZED USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

A. The Chief of Police or designee may authorize the use of social networks or social media sites to any element or employee for the purpose of promoting the RPD's mission, goals and to provide community interaction.

B. Any element or employee receiving authorization to use social media sites to represent the RPD shall notify the Chief of Police of the site's Uniform Resource Locator (URL). The Chief of Police or designee shall maintain a list of RPD authorized social media sites (see list).

C. Department-authorized RPD social media sites shall, whenever practical:

1. Indicate that they are maintained by the department.
2. List department contact information prominently.
3. Include a disclaimer that the opinions expressed by visitors to the page(s) do not reflect the opinions of the department and that the department reserves the right to remove postings which violate federal, state, city or departmental rules, regulations, ordinances, policies or standards (e.g. obscenities, commercial postings, political statements or endorsements).
4. Include the URL that links back to RPD's official website. Additionally, the RPD official website shall include links to the official RPD social media sites.

D. Employees shall adhere to these guidelines when using social media:

1. Employees authorized to use social media on behalf of the department shall conduct themselves professionally in keeping with the standards of the RPD.
2. Employees should be aware that their speech becomes a published record on the World Wide Web and is archived indefinitely. Department personnel shall adhere to all applicable policies, procedures and rules governing the use of social media.
3. Information posted on department-authorized social media sites must be respectful, professional and truthful. Corrections must be issued when needed.
4. Non-compliance with the city's and/or department's policies, guidelines, or procedures regarding social networking sites may result in the revocation of e-mail and Internet privileges and/or other appropriate disciplinary action, including reprimand, suspension, or termination of employment.
5. This policy covers all usage of social networking sites regardless of type of device used to access, including but not limited to mobile data computers, tablets, smart phones, etc.
6. Any official RPD social media account that profiles an RPD employee or group, shall remain under the control of the RPD in the event an employee leaves the department.
7. All official RPD social media sites shall adhere to style and content guidelines as determined by the Chief of Police or a designee.
8. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation or violation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action including reprimand, suspension, or termination of employment.

E. Employees shall only use department equipment, regardless of device-type, for official RPD department business.

F. Employees shall not use personal equipment to conduct official business on behalf of the Raymore Police Department.

Section 8.04 – PROHIBITIONS ON EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Unless contrary to any federal law, state law, city ordinance, employees shall abide by the following when using social media for personal use:

A. Employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech and/or language does not impair working relationships

of the RPD, impede the performance of duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or negatively affect the public perception of the department.

B. Employees shall not divulge information gained by reason of their authority; make any statements, speeches, appearances, or endorsements; or publish materials that appear to represent the views or positions of this department without prior written authorization from the Chief of Police or designee.

C. Officers who are working in undercover operations, or plan to in the future, shall not post any form of visual or personal identification to social media networks which would identify them as an employee of the Raymore Police Department, compromise departmental objectives, or place themselves or another person in danger.

D. Post speech that would compromise departmental objectives, harass others, be considered a threat or place another person in danger.

E. Post speech involving on-duty conduct of themselves or other employees reflecting behavior that would reasonably be considered reckless or irresponsible.

F. Employees shall not post speech that contains obscene or sexually explicit language, images, acts, statements, or other forms of speech that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias toward any individual or group.

G. Employees shall not post speech involving themselves or other employees reflecting behavior that maligns, embarrasses, or causes disrepute to the department.

H. Employees shall not post department logos, banners, or similar identifying items; such as patches, badges, or pictures in RPD attire on personal websites that would lead anyone to believe that website represents or has been approved by the department without prior permission from the Chief of Police or a designee.

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

J. Employees should expect that any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the department at any time without prior notice.

K. Employees should not use their City of Raymore e-mail address to register on social media networks which are used for personal use without prior permission from the Chief of Police or a designee.

Section 8.05 - THIRD-PARTY INVOLVEMENT

A. Employees shall not authorize, facilitate, distribute, or request any third party to display or post any images or comments involving him or herself that would violate any provision in section 8.03.

B. Employees should make reasonable efforts to remove any posts made by a third party on a social networking site under the employee's control, which is not in accordance with sections 8.03 and 8.04.

AUTHORIZED RPD SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/Raymore.Police>

YOUTUBE

<http://www.youtube.com/raymorepd>

TWITTER

<https://twitter.com/RaymorePD>