


<b>PBP FORM 290</b>  <b>PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF POLICE</b> <i>"...honor, integrity, courage, respect, and compassion."</i>		<b>SUBJECT:</b> <b>"PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS"</b>		<b>ORDER NUMBER:</b> <b>68-03</b>
		<b>PLEAC STANDARD:</b> <b>NONE</b>		<b>PAGE 1 OF 3</b>
<b>RE-ISSUE DATE:</b> <b>1/5/2021</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> <b>6/1/2012</b>	<b>REVIEW MONTH:</b> <b>MAY</b>	<b>RESCINDS:</b> <b>N/A</b>	<b>REVIEW DATE:</b> <b>1/5/2021</b>

**1.0 POLICY / PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for members regarding the use of personal social media accounts.
- 1.2 The PBP recognizes the right of employees to participate in online Social Media platforms. However, employees must ensure that their online content is consistent with the Bureau’s standards of conduct. This order is not intended to prohibit activity by members that is protected by the First Amendment. Members are free to express themselves as private citizens when speaking on matters of public concern to the extent that their interests in engaging in such speech is not outweighed by the Bureau’s interest in avoiding workplace disruption and promoting efficient operations. Speech that impairs discipline by supervisors, impedes the performance of the speaker’s duties, disrupts harmony among co-workers, interferes with the regular operation of the enterprise, undermines the mission of the Bureau, conflicts with Bureau policy, constitutes an abuse of authority, or otherwise impairs public accountability may be subject to discipline. The foregoing considerations may apply whether the workplace disruption is actual or reasonably anticipated. Such instances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 1.3 Members who post, transmit, share, disseminate, and / or comment on content via their social media accounts, must do so in strict compliance with the provisions contained in this policy, members who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 1.4 It is the policy of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police that all existing laws, rules, regulations, and policies that govern on and off-duty conduct are applicable to conduct associated with Social Media and Social Networking. When assessing what activities may violate this Order, the Bureau will hold members accountable to the standards of conduct described in the Bureau’s general orders, including but not limited to: *General Order 16-1 Standards of Conduct*; *General Order 68-1 Electronic Communications*; *General Order 20-1 No Discrimination/ No Harassment/ No Retaliation Policy*; and *General Order 10-01 Law Enforcement Code of Ethics*
- 1.5 Members are cautioned that as public employees speech made pursuant to their official duties, whether on or off duty, is not protected under the First Amendment and may be subject to discipline if it is deemed detrimental to the Bureau.
- 1.6 The on and off-duty conduct of members may reflect on the Bureau’s reputation.
- 1.7 This policy will supplement the City of Pittsburgh Social Media Handbook and Electronic Communications Policy: [City of Pittsburgh Human Resources Policies](#)

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 Social Network - A category of internet-based resources that integrate user generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, networking sites, photo and video sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and websites or apps such as Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn, Snapchat, iMessage, and Twitter; as well as vendors such as Survey Monkey and MailChimp, which are considered digital publishing platforms.

- 2.2 Social Media - content that is shared on social networks. Including, but not limited to, images, slideshows, blogs, and video.
- 2.3 Personal Social Media Account - A personal account established by a member with a third-party provider (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) that is not officially affiliated with the PBP. In addition, social media accounts established or administered by members of the PBP for fraternal or charity organizations, off-duty employment, civic or community organizations, etc., are also subject to the provisions of this policy.

### **3.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 3.1 Members should be cognizant of the fact that their social media activity, even on personal social media accounts, may be seen by the public as a statement on behalf of the Bureau. Any activity that can be linked to a member, is a reflection of the Bureau as a whole.
- 3.2 Members are accountable for their conduct, including the use of personal social media accounts. Members should be aware that statements made on social media sites are done so in an online domain where no reasonable expectation of privacy exists. Members creating or belonging to "private" or "limited access" accounts, with customized privacy settings must know that any statements, posts, videos, photographs, etc., that are shared via that account on the internet, may still be disseminated by third parties, even after the content has been edited or deleted by the user.
- 3.3 Members must be aware that information, including digital images, released on social media, may endanger the safety of members and / or their family members. Members are urged not to disclose or allude to their status as a member of the Bureau. Divulging identifying information on social media could possibly compromise ongoing investigations, as well as, limit a member's eligibility for certain assignments (undercover, other highly sensitive assignments).
- 3.4 Members are prohibited from using a City of Pittsburgh email address when establishing a personal social media account, or using social media in personal capacities.
- 3.5 Members shall not post, transmit, share, and / or disseminate Bureau identifiers as part of privately held social media monikers (@pbg\_jdoe123, @zone1\_3181, etc.), nor otherwise express nor imply that they are speaking or acting on behalf of the bureau.
- 3.6 Members shall not post, transmit, share, and / or disseminate Bureau affiliation of other individuals, including, but not limited to, the individual posting, tagging, and / or sharing pictures of other Bureau members, without the express consent of that individual.
- 3.7 Members shall not post transmit, share, and / or disseminate photographs of yourself / themselves or others in uniform, and / or display official identification, patches or badges, marked or unmarked vehicles, Bureau facilities, buildings, and equipment, without authorization of the Bureau (these restrictions will not apply to photographs taken at official Bureau ceremonies).
- 3.8 Members shall not post, transmit, share, and / or disseminate nonpublic items, to include, but not limited to arrest / booking photographs, criminal records, witness statements, crime scene photographs, videos, that were gained as a result of employment within the Bureau.
- 3.9 Members shall not post, transmit, share, and / or disseminate any content involving discourteous or disrespectful remarks, in any form, pertaining to issues of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, gender identity / expression, sexual orientation, and / or disability.
- 3.10 Members shall not post, transmit, share, and / or disseminate any content advocating harassment and violence.
- 3.11 Members shall not post, transmit, share, and / or disseminate any content that is defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, or libelous.
- 3.12 Members shall not engage in any type of social media contact (friending, following, etc.) with an actor, suspect, witness, crime victim, or attorney, involved in the same case, if that Officer was either involved in the incident, or the Officer became acquainted with person during or because of the incident , and the matter is ongoing.

- 3.13 Members shall not engage in any type of social media contact (friending, following, etc.) with minors they interact with in the course of their employment with the Bureau.
- 3.14 Members will not use their personal social media accounts for investigative activities.

Approved by:



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Scott Schubert  
Chief of Police