

# **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

## **Bellevue Police**

### **Bellevue, NE**

#### **Purpose**

The Bellevue Police Department has adopted several innovative tools and encourage employees to use them to contribute to the public dialogue and the future of the Bellevue Police Department. Currently, Facebook, Twitter, My Space, LinkedIn and blogs are perhaps the most well known of these platforms that we currently use. This policy has been written with those interests in mind and is intended to encourage, rather than discourage, our employees' uses of these tools.

The purpose of this policy is to give employees guidance regarding appropriate contact for personal, social networking websites, web pages and other electronically transmitted or hard copied material with respect to the use of the Bellevue Police Department images, materials, logos, or reference to those entities. The integrity of the agency must be above reproach. Therefore, all employees must avoid any conduct which would compromise our integrity, and thus undercut the public confidence in this agency or this profession.

#### **Identification:**

On Department-sanctioned social media sites, you will identify yourself as an employee by using your City e-mail address and your Department photo, unless otherwise approved. If you are developing your own website, engaging in a social network site or writing a blog that will mention the Department, the City of Bellevue, City employees, the public or City issues, identify that you are an employee of the City of Bellevue and the Bellevue Police Department, and the views expressed on the blog, social network site or website are yours alone and do not represent the views of the Department or the City.

#### **Accuracy:**

All information disseminated by you should be absolutely accurate. If a mistake or error is made, be up front about it and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you've done so. In all of your on-line activities, always try to add value. There are always consequences to what you publish. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions contained in this policy and the policies within the City and move forward. If you're still unsure and it's related to the Department or the City, please contact the Supervisor or Commander. You're ultimately responsible for what you publish in any form of on-line social media.

#### **Responsibility & Confidentiality:**

You are responsible to know and follow all City and Department policies, State law, City Ordinances, which provide the foundation of the policies and guidelines for blogs and social computing. The Department insists that blogs, wikis, or other forms of on-line participation that relate to the Department or the City or activities or issues with which the Department is engaged, Department employees use their accurate identity. Do not comment on any work-related legal matters unless you are the Department's official spokesperson for that matter and have Department legal and management approval to do so. Do not use your public voice to discredit or embarrass the Department, community members, your co-workers or even yourself. Ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenities, or any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Department's workplace, is prohibited.

All members of the Bellevue Police Department are reminded that professionalism, ethics and integrity are of paramount importance in the law enforcement community. Members are held to the same Department standards and conduct, whether on or off duty. An employee's actions must never bring the Department into disrepute, nor should conduct be detrimental to its efficient operation.

#### **Respect Copyright and Fair-Use Laws:**

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair-use copyrighted materials owned by others. All copyrighted laws and fair-use laws must be adhered to.

#### **Future Considerations:**

This policy is ever-evolving. Many of the tools we are using today didn't exist just a few years ago. Shortly, there are certain to be new ones worth considering. It is worth noting that we should remain flexible and open-minded as possible when dealing with social media and electronic communication issues.

The developments in electronic technology are an invaluable resource to assist us in the performance of our duties. We must embrace this. However, this technology has the capability to act as double-edged sword; it presents opportunities to access and use technology in both legitimate and illegitimate ways. Whether on or off duty, in uniform or plain clothes, we represent the Bellevue Police Department. Employees shall not place or allow photographs or depictions of themselves dressed in uniform, and/or displaying official identification, patches and badges on the Internet sites such as "My Space" or "You Tube", for any reason, without the express approval of the Chief of Police or his designee.