



**SOCIAL NETWORKING, PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES
AND CAMERAS**

GENERAL ORDER #15.09

Adopted: 10/02/2012
Replaces: NEW

Updated: 10/02/2012
Reviewed: 10/02/2012

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and standards for social networking/social media in all of its related forms and to establish guidelines for use of Personal Communication Devices (PCD) by sworn and non-sworn members of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office. To maintain the public's highest level of trust, reasonable restrictions must be placed on our professional and private conduct in regards to technology and members must hold to these standards of conduct whether on or off duty. Because the County recognizes that social networking plays a burgeoning and often vital role in offices' lives, this policy also is intended as a guide for employees when engaging in social media as it relates to their employment or representation of employment as a member of the Santa Clara Sheriff's Office.

POLICY

Members of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office shall be subject to standards of conduct as outlined in this policy when they interact on and/or use social networking/social media technology, PCDs, and cameras depicting or referencing your official capacity. The policy is intended to provide a reasonable standard of conduct to ensure the professionalism of its members and the integrity of the Sheriff's Office.

DEFINITION

SOCIAL NETWORKING: A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. Popular current examples of social networking sites include Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. The absence of or lack of explicit reference to, a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICE: PCDs include, but are not limited to all cellular phones, Smartphones, iPads, Android Tablets, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA), cameras, and other wireless two-way communication and/or portable internet access devices.

POLICY GUIDELINES

A. SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE WHILE ON DUTY

1. Sheriff's Office members are prohibited from posting, updating or sharing and/or using social networking sites while on duty unless it is for County-approved business purposes. No Sheriff's Office member while on duty shall post any information regarding their work activities or professional affiliation to any social networking site. This does not apply to any Sheriff's Office authorized or maintained sites for the purposes of official business. This paragraph does not seek to limit off-duty conduct.

B. SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE WHILE OFF-DUTY

1. Sheriff's Office members may identify themselves as employees of the Sheriff's Office. However, once you identify yourself as a member of the Sheriff's Office, you take on added responsibility for maintaining an acceptable level of conduct while you are employed with the Department. Members shall carefully consider whether or not to identify themselves as a member of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, employee of the County of Santa Clara or as a peace officer while using social networking sites. Appearing in uniform or identifying yourself as associated with the Sheriff's Office could trigger a review of the posting to determine if it violates our standard of conduct. When using any of the numerous social media sites, Sheriff's Office members should also bear in mind that any information posted may be made visible to the public at large, including potential citizen contacts, suspects, witnesses or victims of crimes.
2. No Sheriff's Office member shall knowingly post, or cause to be posted, or disseminate photographs, video images, audio files, or text documents that constitutes confidential or law enforcement sensitive information. Examples of such confidential or law enforcement sensitive information includes but is not limited to information not appropriate for public dissemination such as:
 - a. Photographs taken in the course of your employment with the Sheriff's Office including traffic collisions, crime scenes, contraband, persons in custody, witnesses, victims, vehicles, equipment or the interior of any Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office Facility.
 - b. Crime or Incident Reports including any form of official correspondence, official memorandum and/or policies to or from the Department or County,
 - c. Audio files, video files, training videos or transcription of any official, non-public statement or interview.
3. No Sheriff's Office member shall knowingly post, or cause to be posted, or disseminate photographs, video images, audio files, or text documents depicting the Sheriff's Office or County property, equipment, uniforms, or emblems, in any manner that places the Sheriff's Office in a negative or unfavorable light.
4. Nothing in this Order shall preclude the use of Social Networking sites to engage in union activity while off duty.

5. Nothing in this order shall preclude the use of Social Networking sites as an investigative tool. Accessing sites sponsored by the Sheriff's Office or the County of Santa Clara is permissible, providing it does not interfere with your official duties and responsibilities.

C. AGENCY ISSUED PCD

Depending on an assignment and needs of the position, the Sheriff's Office may, at its discretion, issue a PCD. Such devices shall remain the sole property of the Sheriff's Office and shall be subject to inspection or monitoring (including all related records and content) at any time without notice.

D. INDIVIDUALLY OWNED PCD(s)

Members of the Sheriff's Office may carry their own PCD while on duty subject to the following conditions:

1. The device shall be purchased, used and maintained at the Sheriff's Office member's expense.
2. The Sheriff's Office shall not be held liable for damage, theft or loss of a personally owned PCD.

E. USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Sheriff's Office members may use a PCD to communicate with other personnel in those situations where the use of the radio is either impractical or not feasible, PCDs however, should not be used to replace regular radio communications.

PCDs, whether provided by the Sheriff's Office or personally owned, should only be used by on-duty members of the Sheriff's Office for legitimate agency business, and as described below:

1. PCDs shall not be carried in a manner that allows it to be generally visible while in uniform, except if being carried in a pouch on the deputy's duty belt.
2. Sheriff's Office members shall refrain from using PCDs while interacting with the public in the course of duty.

Sheriff's Office members shall limit the use of agency PCD's for personal use to appropriate and minimal necessary communications, which does not impact work performance. Sheriff's Office members will be responsible for reimbursing the agency for any charges incurred as a result of personal use of a Sheriff's Office PCD.

Personally owned PCDs may be used for personal reasons, however, usage should be limited as much as practical to areas where the communication will not be seen or heard by members of the public.

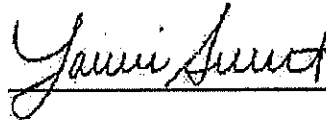
1. The on duty taking and/or retention of photographs for personal reasons are prohibited. All photographs and video taken with a personal camera or PCD while on duty shall be subject to review by a supervisor. Business photographs and video shall be transferred and/or stored to an agency owned device and deleted from the employee's personally owned device per policy.

2. No Sheriff's Office member shall show, send or wirelessly transmit video or photographs taken in the course of one's duty to anyone except as directed by a supervisor.
3. The intent of this policy is not to restrict or require authorization to take photographs or video during ceremonies such as service awards, promotions, retirements or community events such as BBQs, fairs and outreach programs.

F. USE WHILE DRIVING

The use of a PCD while driving can cause unnecessary distractions and presents a negative image to the public.

Except in the case of an emergency, Sheriff's Office members who are operating agency/County vehicles shall not use cellular phones or other personal communication devices while driving unless the PCD is specifically designed and configured to allow hands free listening and talking (Vehicle Code 23123 (a)). Such use should be restricted to emergency related calls. If an employee uses a hands free device, the device may not be worn in the ear if one ear is already obstructed (e.g. earpiece for portable radio). Text messaging on a PCD while driving an agency/County vehicle is prohibited at all times.



LAURIE SMITH
SHERIFF