

DALTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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I. **Policy**

It is the policy of the Dalton Police Department to recognize an employee’s rights to have personal web pages, websites, and social media accounts, as long as the employee exercises appropriate discretion in any reference to the Department or other employees and does not discredit themselves or the Department. Furthermore, when reference is made to or about the Department, a review of that reference may be conducted to ensure that such reference does not cause a decline in public confidence in, or respect for, the Department or employees. Personal expression on the internet, within such defined limits, is permissible.

II. **Definition**

Social Networking Site – Any internet-based website where members of that site can electronically gather to share personal profiles, along with other information and photos, with other members. Examples of these sites include Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, and other sites that promote or allow individuals to express themselves for personal relationships, friendships, or just casual correspondences.

III. **Scope**

- A. This policy shall apply to all Department personnel. Personnel who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- B. The processes and restrictions described in this policy shall be retroactive for any currently existing sites or profiles created by an employee or third party.

IV. **Privacy**

Employees should be aware that information posted on social networking sites is not secure or private. The information may be viewed by any member of the public. Once information has been posted on the Internet, it is also considered to be accessible indefinitely. In the event employees choose to post information on a social networking site, they should be aware that the information could be used for fraudulent purposes. Employees should also be aware that they are jeopardizing their personal confidentiality and that of other employees by posting photographs or personal information about

themselves or other members of the Department. In addition, they may be jeopardizing their safety, the safety of their family, their co-workers, and on-going or future investigations. Employees are advised that in the event information has been posted on a social networking site identifying them as a Police Officer, the posting could make them ineligible for specialized positions where anonymity is required.

V. **Restrictions**

- A. Employees shall not identify themselves or other employees, directly or indirectly, as members of the Department.
- B. Photographs or other depictions of Department uniforms, badges, patches, insignia, and / or vehicles shall not be used on employee internet postings.
- C. No pictures, videos, artwork, comments, or other references depicting violent, sexual, racial, or ethnically derogatory material may be posted or associated with a Department employee.
- D. Employees shall not post, or be associated with, any material on the internet that brings discredit to or may adversely affect the efficiency or integrity of the Department.
- E. Employees shall not use the Department's computer system to access, download, or contribute to any social networking site unless they are lawfully doing so as part of their regular duties or as a part of an investigation requiring access to a social networking site.
- F. Only authorized employees with the approval of the Chief of Police or his / her designee shall be allowed to upload any audio / video files captured on devices owned by the Department.
- G. Employees should consider the possible adverse consequences of internet postings, such as future employment, cross examination in criminal and civil cases, and public / private embarrassment of the employee or the Department.
- H. Employees are encouraged to seek the guidance of Supervisors regarding any posting that may adversely reflect upon either the Department or upon the professionalism or integrity of the employee.

This policy supersedes any policies previously issued.

BY ORDER OF

CHIEF OF POLICE

RESTRICTED LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA

The data contained in this manual is confidential for internal department use only and shall not be divulged outside the department without the written approval of the Chief of Police.