

	LANE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE POLICY	Number: G.O. 4.12
		Issue Date: February 21, 2012
		Revision Date:
CHAPTER: Organization, Management and Administration		Related Policy: APM Chap 3, Section 9, Issue 1 (Lane County Communications and Media Relations), General Order 5.09 Use of Computers
SUBJECT: Social Networking		Related Laws:

POLICY: Employees shall be responsible when utilizing social networking or media sites on and off duty, and conduct themselves in a manner that would not damage the image or integrity of the Sheriff's Office.

DEFINITIONS:

Social Networking: Social network sites that use Internet services to allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within that system, define a list of other users with whom they share some connection, and view and access their list of connections and those made by others within that system. Social networking sites includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, MySpace, WordPress, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Photobucket, blogs, social bookmarking, microblogs and vlogs.

RULE: The use of social networking sites on County resources must comply with General Order 5.09, Use of Computers and not bring discredit to the Sheriff's Office or any member thereof.

PROCEDURE:

I. On-Duty Participation in Social Networking

The County recognizes the role of social networking in the law enforcement for investigative purposes, but caution must be utilized when accessing these sites on duty.

- A. If an employee identifies a business need for accessing a social networking or social media site, the employee must first obtain permission from their Supervisor prior to accessing the site using County resources. Use of social networking sites on-duty must be strictly for County business.
- B. Staff must conduct themselves in a manner so as not to discredit the Sheriff's Office or any member thereof. Staff are personally responsible for the content they publish.

- C. Access of social networking sites must not impede other staff member's work or adversely impact access to or the use of Lane County electronic resources for business purposes.
- D. Personal opinions generally do not belong in official agency statements, with the exception of communications related to promoting a Sheriff's Office service.
- E. All posted information must be respectful, professional and truthful. Corrections to posted information must be issued when needed.
- F. Social Networking must not be used to transmit information or knowingly connect to social media sites for an unlawful or prohibited purpose. Specific restrictions include, but not limited to the following examples:
 - 1. Discrimination on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, sensory, mental, or physical disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.
 - 2. Sexual harassment or media sites containing sexual content.
 - 3. Transmission of obscene materials.
 - 4. Transmission of protected or private information.
 - 5. Infringement of any copyright.
 - 6. Expression of any campaign, political or religious beliefs.
 - 7. Conducting personal, outside business, or business for the purpose of financial benefit or gain.
- G. Social Networking can be used to transmit information to social media sites for approved business purposes only.
 - 1. Attempt to locate a witness or a suspect.
 - 2. Attempt to contact a witness or a suspect.
 - 3. As part of an investigation or an audit.
 - 4. Administrative duties, as approved by Division Manager or above.

II. Off-duty Participation in Social Networking

- A. Employees have a free speech right to comment on County affairs on their personal blogs, social networking sites, and other websites on their own time.

- B. Defamatory statements about County employees and officials are not protected under the law. The County will not defend or hold harmless those who make such allegedly defamatory comments.
- C. When commenting on County issues as a private community member, employees should state that they are “offering a personal view and not speaking on behalf of the County.”

III. Caution when Using Social Networking Sites

- A. Caution must be used when participating in social networking sites, both on and off duty. Information posted on sites, including text and photographs becomes the property of the site and its use is completely out of your control once the information has been posted.
- B. Before posting information, consider whether any information, photographs or other items on line could detract from your professional image or the image of the Sheriff’s Office, including inappropriate photographs of people with any part of a Lane County Sheriff’s Office uniform, equipment or facilities.
- C. Lane County Sheriff’s Office employees and volunteers are obligated to report any inaccurate posting on their networking sites that pertain to the Sheriff’s Office operations.
- D. Information deleted from social networking sites may be retrieved long after it has been deleted.
- E. Information posted on social networking sites can be subpoenaed and used in the court of law. Sarcasm and humor may be interpreted differently in a courtroom.
- F. Posting information, descriptions or comments about official Sheriff’s Office investigations or other confidential information is strictly prohibited.
- G. Information posted on your personal social networking site may be used against you. Information that is posted on your site by others can generally be removed. Personal sites should be monitored closely for information posted by others that could discredit the Sheriff’s Office or any member thereof.
- H. Be cautious when posting personal information on your social networking site, even when you have chosen private security settings. Information such as birth date, address, phone numbers, and other personal information can be used to victimize you.