



## **Personal Social Networking Sites**

### **I. PURPOSE**

To establish guidelines with respect to the use of personal web pages, Internet postings and social networking websites by Departmental personnel.

### **II. POLICY**

The proper functioning of any law enforcement agency relies upon the public's confidence and trust in the individual officers and the agency to effectively protect and serve the public. Any matter which brings the Ridgely Police Department personnel or the agency itself into disrepute has the corresponding effect of reducing that confidence and trust, as it impedes the ability to work with and serve the public. Professionalism is the most significant factor in providing the highest level of service to the public. While employees have the right to use personal/social networking web pages or sites, as members of the Ridgely Police Department, they are public servants who are held to a higher standard than the general public with regards to general and ethical standards. It is the policy of the Ridgely Police Department to maintain a level of professionalism in both on-duty and off-duty conduct and employees shall not engage in conduct that contradicts or impedes the mission of the Department.

### **III. PROCEDURES**

- A. Employees who have personal web pages, memberships with social networking websites or other types of Internet postings, which can be accessed by the public, shall not identify themselves directly or indirectly as an employee of the Ridgely Police Department.
- B. Photographs or other depictions of the Department uniforms, badges, patches, marked patrol vehicles or any other item or material which is identifiable to this Department shall not be used on employee internet postings.
- C. Employees may not represent their opinions or comments as that of the Ridgely Police Department or as an official of the Ridgely Police Department.

**General Order No. 1-7 (Cont.)**

**IV. RESTRICTIONS**

- A. Employees are prohibited from posting, or in any other way broadcasting or disseminating information on the internet, social networking sites or other medium of communication, the business of this Department including, but not limited to, the following:
- B. Photographs/images related to any investigation of this Department or that of any allied agency.
- C. Video or audio files related to any investigation of this Department or that of any allied agency.
- D. Any other information, to include personal opinion, related to any investigation of this Department or that of any allied agency.
- E. Employees will not discuss or divulge Department business on their website or in any other medium of communication as addressed in this policy.
- F. Employees are prohibited from posting, broadcasting or otherwise disseminating any sexual, violent, racial or ethically derogatory material, comments, pictures, artwork, video or other references on their websites or through any other means of communication.
- G. Employees shall not post any material on the Internet that brings discredit to or may adversely affect the efficiency or integrity of the Ridgely Police Department.
- H. Employees are prohibited from accessing these types of websites while on duty, unless the employee is conducting a criminal or administrative investigation that has been approved by a supervisor.
- I. Employees should consider the possible adverse consequences of Internet postings, such as future employment, cross examinations in criminal cases and public as well as private embarrassment.