

7-119 SOCIAL NETWORKING (12/15/09)

I. PURPOSE

To establish policy regarding employee use of social networking websites.

II. DEFINITIONS

Social Networking Websites: Sites which focus on building online communities of people who share interests and activities and/or exploring the interests and activities of others. Examples of social networking websites include: Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, Linked In, Twitter, and sites that allow users to post personal blogs. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to, a specific site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy.

III. POLICY

The MPD has a duty to protect the reputation of the organization and its employees, as well as guard against liability and potential legal risk. Therefore, MPD reserves the right to monitor these websites, and employees are advised of the following:

Employees should exercise caution and good judgment when social networking online. Employees should be aware that the content of these social networking sites can be subpoenaed and used in criminal and civil trials to impeach the employee's testimony.

Any individual who can be identified as an employee of the MPD has no reasonable expectation of privacy when social networking online, and is subject to all pertinent City of Minneapolis policies, MPD policies, local, state, and federal laws regarding public information on arrests, investigations, and personnel data.

This policy supplements the City of Minneapolis' Electronic Communications Policy.

IV. PROCEDURE / REGULATIONS

A. Failure to comply with the following may result in discipline, up to and including discharge:

- Where the poster can be identified as an employee of the MPD, any postings involving offensive or unethical content are not permitted.
- Employees shall not represent that they are speaking or acting on behalf of the MPD, or that they are representing or presenting the interests of the MPD.
- Employees are prohibited from using social networking sites to harass or attack others, including those who work for the MPD.

B. Authorized exceptions to the above regulation include utilizing social networking websites for MPD-approved public relations and official investigative and/or work-related purposes as approved by Police Administration