

<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 4.13</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: INTERNET USE & ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING</p>	<p>Amends:</p>	<p>Rescinds:</p>	
<p>Index as: Internet Use</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 1.27, 1.28</p>		
<p>Special Instructions:</p>			

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to direct the employees of this agency with respect to the use of the internet, the world-wide web, and social networking as a medium of communication impacting this department.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The internet, blogs, twitter, the worldwide web, social networking sites and any other medium of electronic communication shall not be used in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.

DISCUSSION

It is essential for every employee of this agency to recognize that the proper functioning of any law enforcement agency relies upon the public's confidence and trust in the individual officers and this agency to carry out the law enforcement function. Therefore, any matter that brings individual employees or the agency into disrepute has the corresponding effect of reducing public confidence and trust in our agency, thus, impeding our ability to work with and serve the public. Professionalism is the most significant factor in high-level performance, which in turn builds the public confidence and trust. While employees have the right to use personal / social networking pages or sites, as employees of this agency, they are public servants who are held to a higher standard than the general public with regard to standards of conduct and ethics. As such, the policy of this agency is to maintain a level of professionalism in both on-duty and off-duty conduct that fulfills the mission of our agency. Any publication, through any medium, which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of this agency, will be deemed a violation of this policy.

I. PROHIBITED USE & CONDUCT

- A. Employees of this agency are prohibited from using agency computers for any unauthorized purpose including surfing the internet or participating in social networking sites.
- B. Employees of this agency are prohibited from posting, or in any other way broadcasting, without prior agency approval, information on the internet, or other medium of communication, the business of this agency to include but not limited to:
 - a. Photographs / images relating to any investigation of this agency.
 - b. Video, or audio files related to any investigation of this agency.
 - c. Video, audio, photographs, or any other images etc. which memorialize a law enforcement related action of this agency.
 - d. Logos / uniforms / Badges or other items which are symbols associated with this agency.
 - e. Any other item or material, which is identifiable to this agency.
- C. Employees of this agency who utilize social networking sites, blogs, twitter or other mediums of electronic communication in their off-duty time shall maintain an appropriate level of professionalism and appropriate conduct so as not to broadcast in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.
 - a. Employees shall not use references in these social networking sites or other mediums of communication that in any way represent themselves as an employee of this agency without prior agency approval. This shall include but not limited to:
 - 1. Text which identifies this agency.
 - 2. Photos that depict the logos, patches, badge or other identifying symbol of this agency.
 - 3. Accounts of events which occur within this agency.
 - 4. Any other material, text, audio, video, photograph, or image which would be identifiable to this agency.
 - b. Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of internet communication to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature.
 - c. Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of internet communication to post any materials which would promote violence or weaponry.
 - d. Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of communication to post or broadcast any materials which would be detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.

- D. Employees of this agency are prohibited from using their titles as well as any reference to this agency in any correspondence to include emails, postings, blogs, twitter social network sites such as Facebook, unless the communication is of an official nature and is serving the mission of this agency. This prohibition also includes signature lines in personal email accounts. An employee may seek agency approval for such use.
- E. New employees: All candidates seeking employment with this agency shall be required to complete an affidavit indicating their participation in any social networking sites. This affidavit shall include the name of the sites. The candidate shall provide the agency with access to their site as part of any background examination.
- F. Administrative Investigations: Employees who are subject to administrative investigations may be ordered to provide the agency with access to the social networking site when the subject of the investigation is directly, narrowly, and specifically related to the employee's performance or ability to perform his or her function within the agency or when the subject of the investigation is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the agency.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**
Sheriff, Rabun County