

# **Brook Park, Ohio Police Department**



## **3-10 Internet Sites/Web Pages/Social Networking**

Effective Date: September 3, 2009

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Professionalism, ethics, and integrity are of paramount importance in the law enforcement community. To achieve and maintain the public's highest level of respect, we must place reasonable restrictions on our conduct and appearance, and hold to these standards of conduct whether on or off duty. An employee's actions must never bring the department into disrepute, not should conduct be detrimental to its efficient operation.

### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to establish departmental policy concerning personal web pages or internet sites when referencing the Brook Park Police Department, to ensure employees use appropriate discretion in the use of references to the Brook Park Police Department so as not to discredit or disrespect the department, to ensure that the release, either directly or indirectly, of information concerning crimes, accidents, or violations of ordinances or statutes to persons outside the department is not disseminated, and that all employees treat as confidential the official business of the department.

### **III. POLICY**

Employees of the Brook Park Police Department have a right to have personal web pages or sites. When reference is made to or about the Brook Park Police Department, a review of that reference is needed to ensure that such reference does not compromise our integrity and thus, undercut the public confidence in this agency or this profession. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Brook Park Police Department that employees of the department are prohibited from posting, transmitting and/or disseminating any photographs, video or audio recordings, likenesses or images of department logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked vehicles, equipment, or other material that specifically identifies the Brook Park Police Department, on any personal or social networking website or web page, without the express written permission of the Chief of Police.

No employee shall represent themselves, directly or indirectly, in any public forum as a member of the Brook Park Police Department, either by text, photograph, or image depicting the uniform, badge, or patch, in any manner that reflects a lack of good moral character. No employee will represent themselves in any public forum as an employee of the Brook Park Police Department with other information, opinion, or posture that would bring unfavorable criticism or embarrassment upon the department.

#### **IV. PROCEDURES**

- A. Employees having personal web pages or other types of internet postings which can be accessed by the public, shall not place or allow photographs or depictions of themselves dressed in uniform and/or displaying official identification, patches or badges, or in any other way, either directly or indirectly, identify themselves as an employee of the Brook Park Police Department for any reason, without approval as indicated in this directive.
- B. Photographs or other depictions of department uniforms, badges, patches, or marked units shall not be posted on internet sites without the approval of the Chief of Police.
- C. Photographs of the inside of the police building as well as any crime or accident scene shall not be posted.
- D. Employees are prohibited from posting, transmitting, and/or disseminating any pictures or videos of official department training, activities, or work-related assignments without the express written permission of the Chief of Police.
- E. Employees wishing to use photographs, depictions, or references to the Brook Park Police Department must receive approval of the Chief of Police.
- F. Employees who post photos, comments, etc. of other department employees must inform and seek approval from the employee(s) before posting same.
- G. Any employee becoming aware of or having knowledge of a posting or of any website or web page in violation of the provisions of this policy shall notify his supervisor immediately for follow-up action.
- H. Sites deemed inappropriate, whether an employment association or not, bringing discredit to this department or to a department employee, or promoting misconduct, whether on or off duty, may be investigated through a criminal or administrative investigation.
- I. All employees shall treat as confidential the official business of the department.
- J. No employee shall release, either directly or indirectly, information concerning crimes, accidents, or violations of ordinances or statutes to persons outside the department.
- K. No employee shall reveal any unauthorized information to any person not a member of the department or authorized to receive such information.
- L. No employee shall gossip about the affairs of the department with persons outside of the department.

- M. If an employee indicates in any public forum any opinion on a police related issue, then that employee shall state that the views and opinions expressed are the employee's personal ones, and not those of the Brook Park Police Department.

## **V. APPROVAL PROCESS**

- A. An employee seeking approval to use references to the Brook Park Police Department on a personal website, web page, or other public forum, shall submit a request for approval to the Chief of Police via the chain of command.
- B. The request shall describe the proposed reference and purpose.
- C. A list of the reference(s) and any media to be used shall be provided.
- D. A printed layout of the entire web page, posting, or site shall be provided.
- E. The employee will receive an approval or denial of the request.
- F. Any changes made to a previously approved posting must be submitted for re-consideration.

## **VI. LIMITATIONS**

- A. No sexual, violent, racial, ethnically derogatory material, comments, pictures, artwork, video or other reference may be posted along with any department approved reference.
- B. Employees shall not post any material on the internet that brings discredit to or may adversely affect the efficiency or integrity of the Brook Park Police Department.
- C. Employees should consider the possible adverse consequences of internet postings, such as future employment, cross-examination in criminal cases, and public as well as private embarrassment.
- D. Employees are reminded to exercise good judgment and demonstrate personal accountability when choosing to participate on social-networking sites.

By order of:  
Kevin McQuaid  
Chief of Police  
Brook Park Police Department  
17401 Holland Road  
Brook Park, OH 44142  
<http://www.cityofbrookpark.com>