

Department Use of Social Media

341.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that any use of social media on behalf of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Police Department (UMBPD) is consistent with the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and UMBPD's mission.

This policy does not address all aspects of social media use. Specifically, it does not address:

- Personal use of social media by department members (see the Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking Policy 1030).
- Use of social media in personnel processes (see the Recruitment and Selection Policy 1000).
- Use of social media as part of a criminal investigation, other than disseminating information to the public on behalf of this department (see the Investigation and Prosecution Policy 600).

341.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Social media - Any of a wide array of internet-based tools and platforms that allow for the sharing of information, such as the department website or social networking services.

341.2 POLICY

The UMBPD may use social media as a method of effectively informing the public about department services, events, emergencies, investigations, and other relevant departmental information.

Department members shall ensure that the use or access of social media is done in a manner that protects the constitutional rights and privacy of all. Transparency, respectful engagement, and free expression are essential to responsible social media utilization.

For further information on appropriate use, best practices, and branding standards related to social media, refer to the UMB official social media guidelines at <http://www.umb.edu/cpa/social-media-guidelines/>. These guidelines provide comprehensive direction to ensure consistency, professionalism, and alignment with UMB's communication strategies across all platforms.

341.3 AUTHORIZED USERS

Only the UMBPD Public Information Officer and/or other UMBPD employees authorized by the Chief of Police (or designee) may manage social media on behalf of the UMBPD. Authorized UMBPD social media managers shall use only department-approved equipment during the normal course of duties to post and monitor department-related social media, unless they are specifically authorized to do otherwise by their supervisors.

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The Chief of Police may develop specific guidelines identifying the type of content that may be posted. Any content that does not strictly conform to the guidelines should be approved by a supervisor prior to posting.

Requests to post on UMBPD social media channels by unauthorized employees should be made through the employee's chain of command.

341.4 AUTHORIZED CONTENT

Only content that is appropriate for public release, that supports UMB and UMBPD's mission and conforms to all university and department policies regarding the release of information may be posted.

Examples of appropriate content include:

- (a) Announcements.
- (b) Tips and information related to crime prevention.
- (c) Investigative requests for information.
- (d) Requests that ask the community to engage in projects that are relevant to the department mission.
- (e) Real-time safety information that is related to in-progress crimes, geographical warnings or disaster information.
- (f) Traffic information.
- (g) Media releases.
- (h) Recruitment of personnel.

Authorized members shall review all content prior to posting to ensure that the posting does not contain prohibited content.

341.4.1 INCIDENT-SPECIFIC USE

In instances of active incidents where speed, accuracy, and frequent updates are paramount (e.g., crime alerts, public safety information, traffic issues), the UMBPD Public Information Officer (or designee) will be responsible for compiling and releasing information, subject to the approval of the Incident Commander (as needed).

341.5 PROHIBITED CONTENT

Content that is prohibited from posting includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Content that is abusive, discriminatory, inflammatory, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, sexually explicit, or a personal attack.
- (b) Any information that violates individual rights, including confidentiality and/or privacy rights and those provided under state, federal, or local laws.
- (c) Any information that could compromise an ongoing investigation.

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- (d) Any information that could compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of UMB, the UMBPD, or its members.
- (e) Any information that could tend to compromise the safety and security of department operations, members of the department, victims, suspects or the public.
- (f) Any content posted for personal use.
- (g) Any content that has not been properly authorized by this policy or a supervisor.

Any member who becomes aware of content on this department's social media site that they believe is unauthorized or inappropriate should promptly report such content to a supervisor. The supervisor should contact UMBPD's Public Information Officer immediately, who will ensure its removal from public view and investigate the cause of the entry.

341.6 SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS AND EFFECTIVENESS

The Public Information Officer will report, at least annually, to the Chief of Police on the effectiveness of social media content using metrics for each social media platform - including number of posts, followers, engagement (number of likes, reactions, comments, and shares a post receives), and impressions (number of times content was displayed on a person's screen).

341.6.1 CONTENT MODERATION AND DELETION

In accordance with UMB's comment moderation and deletion policy:

Anything posted on an official UMB social media site — by the page's administrator or followers — should be in good taste and appropriate for all audiences.

University social media efforts encourage fans, followers, and friends to share their thoughts with one another via comments on stories, videos, links, posts, etc., within the following guidelines.

- Comments must be relevant to a topic discussed and to the point.
- Comments should be constructive and absent of expletives, obscenity, and vulgarity, in accordance with University guidelines/core values.
- Posts that are abusive, contain profanity, threatening in tone, or devolve into personal attacks will be deleted.
- Posts with links that are determined to be spam or sales and advertising should be removed immediately.
- Account administrators reserve the right to review all comments and posted materials and remove such materials for any reason.

Unless a commenter goes against the page rules the account manager has laid out, comments should not be deleted.

341.7 RETENTION OF RECORDS

The Director of Support Services/Security Bureau should work with the Custodian of Records to establish a method of ensuring that public records generated in the process of social media use are retained in accordance with established records retention schedules.

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341.8 TRAINING

Authorized UMBPD social media managers should receive training that, at a minimum, addresses legal issues concerning the appropriate use of social media sites, as well as privacy, civil rights, dissemination, and retention of information posted on department sites.