

IDAHO STATE POLICE PROCEDURE

02.05.03 OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

I. Purpose

This procedure establishes standards for the creation, management, and use of official Idaho State Police (ISP) social media accounts to ensure consistent messaging, professionalism, and compliance with applicable laws and agency procedures.

Content published on ISP social media accounts constitutes official agency communication. All digital asset releases must comply with [ISP Procedure 02.05 – Public Affairs and Communications](#), including the provisions governing authorized and prohibited information for release.

II. Strategy and Use

ISP uses social media platforms to communicate with the public about public safety information, agency activities, and community outreach. All content published on ISP social media accounts is subject to oversight by the Public Affairs Office (PAO) to ensure consistency with agency messaging, operational considerations, and applicable procedures.

The PAO is responsible for the coordination, management, and strategic use of ISP social media accounts. Employees are encouraged to submit appropriate content for consideration through their Bureau, District, Program supervisor, or directly to the PAO.

III. Appropriate Content

A. ISP social media accounts may be used to communicate information that supports public safety, agency operations, and community engagement.

B. Appropriate content includes:

1. Agency news releases and official announcements.
2. Real-time information regarding crime or traffic incidents directly affecting public safety.
3. Roadway, traffic, and weather conditions.
4. Crime prevention topics and safety education.
5. Requests for tips or public assistance when approved by investigators.
6. AMBER Alerts, Endangered/Missing Person Alerts, and other authorized public safety notifications.
7. Recruitment and employment opportunities.
8. Public education about ISP programs and community events.
9. Information highlighting partnerships with other law enforcement agencies or community organizations.
10. Employee recognition.

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- C. ISP social media accounts shall not be used to endorse, promote, or oppose private businesses, commercial products, political campaigns, or ballot initiatives. This restriction does not prohibit acknowledging partnerships with organizations supporting public safety initiatives, community events, or law enforcement programs, when such acknowledgment is informational and not promotional.

IV. Approved Platforms

- A. To maximize outreach and ensure efficient use of agency resources, the following social media platforms are authorized and maintained by the PAO:
 - 1. Facebook – one agency account
 - 2. Instagram – one agency account
 - 3. LinkedIn – one agency account
 - 4. X (Twitter) – one Headquarters account and District/Program accounts (as approved by the PAO)
 - 5. YouTube – one agency account
- B. Additional platforms may be approved by the PAO as communication needs evolve and technology changes.

V. Establishing Official Accounts

New social media accounts representing ISP must receive prior approval from the Director or the PAO. No employee, Bureau, District, or Program shall independently create, operate, or represent an account as an ISP social media account without prior approval.

- A. Requests for new accounts must originate from a Bureau, District, or Program supervisor.
- B. Upon approval, the PAO will coordinate account creation with Information Technology Systems.
 - 1. A dedicated ISP email account will be created whenever possible.
 - 2. The PAO will maintain records of account ownership, administrative access, and account credentials.
 - 3. Significant changes to account administration or access shall be coordinated between the administrative user and the PAO.
- C. Employees authorized to manage or post to accounts must comply with relevant agency procedures to ensure content complies with applicable laws and public records requirements.

VI. Account Management

- A. Accounts that remain inactive for extended periods shall be reviewed by the PAO to determine whether they should be deactivated.

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- B. Any social media account that reasonably appears to represent ISP but has not received approval shall be discontinued.
- C. Employees authorized to manage or post to ISP social media accounts shall:
 - 1. Ensure posts comply with applicable laws, agency policies, and public records requirements.
 - 2. Clearly represent content as a statement or stance by ISP.
 - 3. Conduct themselves professionally in all online interactions.
 - 4. Observe and comply with copyright, trademark, and other intellectual property protections.
 - 5. Use agency-issued devices when practicable or otherwise ensure agency account credentials remain secure.

VII. Branding and Identification

- A. ISP social media accounts must use approved agency logos or imagery consistent with agency branding standards.
- B. Account descriptions or biographies shall clearly identify the account as an ISP account and include a link to the ISP website when appropriate.
- C. ISP social media accounts shall include language indicating it is not monitored for emergency reporting. When possible, it should include language directing the public to call 911 or contact the appropriate law enforcement agency to report emergencies or crimes.
- D. Account names, handles, and profile indicators shall follow PAO-established naming conventions to ensure consistency, authenticity, and public recognition.

VIII. Public Comment Moderation

- A. ISP social media accounts may allow public comments when supported by the platform. When public comments are enabled, the comment section constitutes a limited public forum. ISP will not remove or restrict comments based solely on viewpoint and shall apply moderation in a viewpoint-neutral manner.
- B. Protected Speech: The following examples represent protected speech and generally may not be removed:
 - 1. Differing viewpoints or opinions regarding ISP policies, actions, or decisions.
 - 2. Criticism of public officials, including ISP employees.
 - 3. Speech that may be offensive, controversial, or unpopular.
 - 4. Profanity or vulgar language that does not constitute a threat, harassment, or unlawful speech.

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5. Speech expressing personal beliefs, including political or ideological viewpoints.
- C. Unprotected Speech: Comments may be removed only by the PAO when they constitute unprotected speech or otherwise violate platform rules, including:
1. True threats of violence against individuals or groups.
 2. Incitement of imminent unlawful activity.
 3. Obscenity as defined by law.
 4. Clear defamation involving false statements of fact.
 5. Harassment or targeted intimidation of individuals.
 6. Spam, malware, or repetitive off-topic content.
 7. Commercial advertising or solicitation of services.
 8. Content that violates copyright or intellectual property laws.
- D. When practical, ISP social media pages should include a notice informing users that comments are monitored and may be removed when they violate these standards.
- E. ISP may retain and document a record of removed comments for public records compliance or administrative review. Documentation should include the reason for removal and the applicable category under this section.
- F. ISP social media accounts may limit the ability of users to upload photographs, videos, links, or other media directly to agency pages when the platform allows such controls. This restriction helps prevent the posting of graphic images, copyrighted material, or other content that may compromise investigations or violate privacy protections.
- IX. Comparable Information
- A. Social media accounts are not the sole mechanism for conducting ISP business or releasing public information. When feasible, information of significant public importance shall also be made available through ISP-controlled platforms, such as the agency website or other communication channels.
- B. Members of the public shall not be required to join or use a third-party social media platform to access information within ISP's control.
- X. Legal and Administrative Considerations
- A. Content posted to ISP social media accounts constitutes government communication.
- B. To comply with ADA requirements, digital assets should incorporate alternative and descriptive text whenever possible.

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- C. Social media activity may be subject to public records requests and must comply with ISP records management procedures.