

IDAHO STATE POLICE PROCEDURE

02.05.05 EMPLOYEE PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

I. PURPOSE

This procedure provides guidance to Idaho State Police (ISP) employees on the personal use of the digital ecosystem outside official ISP communication channels. It is intended to balance employees' First Amendment rights with the agency's responsibility to maintain professionalism, public trust, and effective operations. ISP recognizes that employees may engage in lawful speech and expression as private citizens, and nothing in this procedure is intended to prohibit or infringe on freedoms protected by law. At the same time, employees must be aware that they are public servants whose conduct - whether on or off duty - may affect public confidence, working relationships, and the agency's mission.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- A. When employees use the digital ecosystem while off duty, they must recognize that their activity may reasonably be associated with their employment at ISP.
- B. Employees should exercise sound judgment when posting content which may be viewed by the public, media, or members of the law enforcement community. Employees must recognize that such content may be subject to disclosure in criminal or civil proceedings to challenge an individual's credibility or testimony.
- C. Employees must not represent their personal opinions as official agency positions unless authorized to do so.
- D. Employees shall not use ISP-issued equipment, email accounts, passwords, or agency credentials to create or manage personal social media accounts.
- E. Any use of the personal digital ecosystem must also comply with [ISP Procedure 02.05 – Public Affairs and Communications](#), as well as all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

III. NEXUS TO EMPLOYMENT

- A. Employees may be subject to administrative review when their personal online conduct creates a reasonable connection (nexus) to their employment with ISP and has the potential to adversely affect the mission, operations, reputation, efficiency, integrity, or professionalism of ISP or the employee. This includes situations in which an employee willfully creates or disseminates or willfully participates in the creation of or dissemination of any digital content.
- B. Employees who reference their employment, or whose affiliation with ISP can be reasonably construed, should include a clear disclaimer such as, "The views I am

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expressing are my own and do not represent the Idaho State Police.” The presence of a disclaimer does not eliminate the potential impact of posted content.

- C. When content establishes a nexus to employment with ISP, employees are responsible for what they create, share, or maintain within their personal digital ecosystem and shall take reasonable and prompt action to remove or correct any content that violates this procedure.

IV. PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- A. Employees shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential or non-public information obtained through their employment. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Investigative information.
 - 2. Law enforcement reports, records, or recordings.
 - 3. Crime scene photographs or videos.
 - 4. Internal communications.
 - 5. Law enforcement sensitive tactics or procedures.
 - 6. Any information that has the potential to impact the safety of ISP employees or the public.

V. PERSONAL CONDUCT

- A. Employees should avoid creating content for the digital ecosystem that is contrary to the professional conduct expectations for ISP personnel. ([EHF 01.02](#))
- B. Speech, opinions, or digital content, even when made off duty, that may compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation, or professionalism of ISP or its employees are prohibited.

VI. MISUSE OF POSITION OR AGENCY IDENTITY

- A. Employees may not represent or identify themselves in any way that could be reasonably perceived as representing ISP. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - 1. Endorse, support, oppose, or contradict any political campaign or initiative.
 - 2. Espouse a political position.
 - 3. Endorse, support, oppose, or contradict any social issue, cause, or religion.
 - 4. Endorse, support, or oppose any product, service, company, or any commercial entity, regardless of whether such is for-profit.
 - 5. Appear in any commercial, publication, or any type of production, public broadcast, or anything on the digital ecosystem without the prior written consent of the ISP Director or the designee.

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- B. Nothing in this procedure is intended to affect an employee's right to vote as they choose, to support candidates of their choice, or to express their opinions as private citizens.

VII. ON-DUTY CONDUCT

- A. While on duty, employees shall not create, record, or participate in the creation or production of any personal digital content.
- B. While on duty, employees may participate in the creation of digital content if it is specifically intended for distribution through official agency platforms for public outreach or training.