

**BAY CITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
BAY CITY, MICHIGAN**

SECTION 1 - ADMINISTRATIVE
GENERAL ORDER

October 15, 2013
INDEX NO. 1.5

BAY CITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY FACEBOOK PAGE

I. PURPOSE

The Bay City Department of Public Safety must have the support of the community to be successful. Communication is the key to establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with the public. Facebook is a user friendly platform to disseminate information to the media and the public in a timely fashion. This policy establishes guidelines regarding community-based communications and relations through the use of Facebook and the release of information to the public through Facebook.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Bay City Department of Public Safety to keep the public informed on law enforcement, fire operations and public safety issues, cooperate with the news media and to maintain an atmosphere of open communication. Information shall be released to the public and media in an impartial, accurate and timely fashion. It is important to recognize that all information we disseminate reflects upon the credibility of the entire agency. It shall be the responsibility of each employee to abide by this philosophy of cooperation. The message publisher must ensure that information is released on a fair and consistent basis in such a manner that the dignity and privacy of victims and witnesses are protected. No employee shall release any information that would jeopardize an active investigation, prejudice an accused person's right to a fair trial, or violate the law or this General Order.

III. AUTHORITY TO RELEASE INFORMATION

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Public Safety Director to release information to the public. Information pertaining to department activity will be made readily available to the public through Facebook, subject to guidelines established in this directive. That responsibility is delegated to the following personnel:

- A. All law enforcement supervisors, along with the Fire Chief and their Assistant Chiefs, will be assigned as administrators for the Bay City Department of Public Safety Facebook page.
- B. Supervisors can publish any level of message on Facebook and authorize other personnel to publish Facebook updates on their behalf when it is in the best interest of the department or public to release information in an immediate or timely manner.

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- C. Supervisors assigned to the Detective Bureau are encouraged to aggressively use the service when a crime pattern, trend, or other emergent matter presents itself.

- D. In a multi-jurisdictional investigation, all agencies involved will be consulted to coordinate the release of public information on Facebook.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS

The following shall be considered when posting any message type:

- 1. Accuracy of the information you are distributing;
- 2. Keep the message short;
- 3. Provide a summary of the problem / trend / pattern;
- 4. When applicable, provide prevention / safety tips related to the message;
- 5. Remind subscribers to report suspicious activities;
- 6. Specify location by nearest cross street;
- 7. If possible, include pictures in postings;
- 8. Before a Facebook notification is posted, have someone else review it for content and clarity; and
- 9. A notification that is of an emergency nature must include notification up the chain of command.

V. INFORMATION RELEASE GUIDELINES

The release of information is subject to restrictions placed by applicable local, state, and federal laws. No member of this agency shall release any information that would hamper the successful conclusion of an investigation or jeopardize the safety of affected persons.

- 1. Agency members may release the following information on crime / criminal activity:
 - a. Basic information about a crime or incident;
 - b. Basic information about victims, except as excluded by law;
 - c. Description of suspects;
 - d. Basic description of weapons and vehicles used;
 - e. Basic description of stolen items;
 - f. Basic description of injuries and condition of victims;
 - g. The name, age and other basic information about arrestees and the charges against them after they are arraigned;

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- h. Information contained in applicable incident reports;
 - i. Booking photographs; and
 - j. Suspect photographs or sketches necessary to identify an unknown offender.
2. Agency members shall not release the following information:
- a. Names, addresses, and any other information that would identify the victim of a sex offense, child abuse, or any other crime where the privacy of the victim is protected;
 - b. Names, addresses, and basic information about juvenile arrestees;
 - c. Active criminal investigative information, active criminal intelligence information, and surveillance techniques;
 - d. Names of informants and information provided by them;
 - e. Active internal affairs investigations, as governed by state law;
 - f. Names of witnesses;
 - g. The identity of critically injured or deceased persons prior to notifications of next-of-kin;
 - h. Home address, telephone numbers, and familial information of law enforcement personnel; and
 - i. Any other information prohibited by state law from public disclosure.

By order of:


Michael J. Cecchini
Public Safety Director

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