



Empowering Policing Families with Social Media Safety

Social media can help families and friends maintain valuable social connections that build resiliency and well-being, but it is important to use these tools safely. While all social media platforms offer varying levels of security and privacy, consider the following general safety tips for your law enforcement family.



Social Media Considerations to Maximize Well-being

- **Take control** over what content you view to help make your social media accounts a positive social space that enhances your well-being. Muting or unfollowing negative information sources can help improve your mental health by reducing the presence of items on your page that cause stress.
- **Encourage time limits and moderation** on phone and social media use. Have family members identify a time each night to set the phone down to avoid sleep disruption.
- **Avoid social media fatigue** and protect your well-being by taking breaks from social media.



Protect Your Profile with Privacy Settings

- **Check for platform updates regularly**, as social media sites can add or change preferred security settings to default options that may not maximize privacy.
- **Perform a periodic audit** of your social media accounts by seeing what your account looks like when viewed by the public. You can do this by logging out of your account and completing a web search of your social media profile using your name.
- **Know who has access** to your profile and information. Acquaintances, “friends of friends,” or the public may be able to see your posts, even though you may not be connected with them on social media.



Safeguarding Identifying Information

- **Practice caution** when posting photos. Your profile may give away more information than you realize. Cover photos and profile pictures may be public as a default setting.
- **Avoid posting images that share information** on where you live, what school your children attend, place of employment for you or your family members, department uniforms, and when you are away from home for extended periods of time.

- **Consider using a different last name** or only your first name to avoid being identified on social media.
- **Be selective in who you choose to add** as a friend on social media. Verify you know the person and be wary of accounts that look suspicious.
- **Disable automatic location** settings on your posts that could reveal your current location.
- **Set the option to review photos** you are tagged in before they are publicly shared on your page. Speak candidly with friends and family about your preference for posting and sharing photos of you and your family.
- **Refrain from posting on social media following an officer death or critical incident** until the department publicly releases information to provide time for proper notification of involved parties.



Additional Steps for Security

- **Ensure your privacy and account security** by enabling two-factor authentication. This adds an extra layer of security by logging in and verifying your identity by phone or a separate email account.
- **Avoid recycling passwords.** While it might be convenient, it makes it easier for someone else to access multiple accounts with little effort. Regularly update your password, and always change it if something unusual appears on your account.
- **Question anything that may look like a scam** or phishing attempt. Delete or report suspicious inquiries from other accounts.
- **Set notifications** to alert you when your account is accessed on a new device.

For access to more family wellness resources, visit www.theiacp.org/OSW.



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