

Social media policy

Executive summary

Police has a strong social media presence across a number of major social media platforms. This policy will help to guide you when using work and personal social media, disseminating messages on Police accounts, and interacting with our followers.

The Policy also outlines other Police policies and guidelines that this policy is based on, as well as specific social media features and functions that have an important role in providing guidelines for staff and social media admin.

In line with the principles of the Police High Performance Framework (PHPF), Media and Communications are responsible for setting the strategy for social media and for providing the tools and training to enable districts and service centres to manage their platforms and content, as part of our public engagement.

The [Code of Conduct](#) applies to all employees when using social media (both for work and personal purposes). It is also crucial that personal and work social media activity remains separate. Be aware of the risks of using social sites and take the steps below to protect yourself, your (and our) reputation, your family, colleagues and the wider organisation.

The Police social media approach is intended to be consistent, responsive, engaging and representative of our brand. Adhering to these guidelines will ensure we have a consistent and positive online presence which supports Our Business goals and targets, especially to increase public trust and confidence. Content that does not adhere to this policy may be hidden, removed, or escalated for learning and resolution.

Police social media contacts

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

If you have questions about your district pages (or about our national pages) please get in touch with [Redacted] and [Redacted] in the first instance.

Our social media platforms

As part of setting the strategy, Media and Communications monitor social media trends and makes strategic decisions as to which platforms suit our engagement needs.

As part of the Police [Social Media Strategy](#) this is our current social media presence.

	National Page	District Pages
Facebook	Yes ¹	Yes
Twitter	Yes ²	Yes ³
Instagram	Yes	Yes
LinkedIn	Yes	No
YouTube	Yes	Yes ⁴

Footnote 1: Our national Facebook pages are New Zealand Police, NZ Police Recruitment, and NZ Police Museum.

Footnote 2: In addition to the national NZ Police account we also have an NZ Police Media account (media releases for journalists) and a Commissioner of Police Twitter account.

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Footnote 3: While we have two district Twitter pages, we don't recommend districts set up new Twitter accounts as we have a strong national presence.

Footnote 4: Requests for District YouTube pages needs to be sent to Media and Communications for consideration.

Our social media model

To ensure a consistent, manageable, and professional online presence, the Police social media model is limited to one page per district, as well as the set national pages. Rather than having multiple pages per district our model is a district model. We have one district page, and we communicate through that page.

Our policy is based around investing most of our time in Facebook and Instagram as they have the highest levels of engagement, and reach our target audience the best.

Personal use of social media

Dos

- When posting personal opinions on your personal social media accounts, make sure that it's clear that it is your own view and not the Police view on a particular issue.
- Only access personal social media sites at work as outlined in the '[Information management, privacy and assurance](#)' chapter in the Police Manual.
- Select high privacy settings on your personal accounts to prevent others (including media) viewing or using your information and photos.
- Be aware of security advice issued through the [Bulletin Board](#) - do what you can to avoid being the victim of harassment, identity theft, or other unwanted attention from criminals.

Don'ts

- Posting photos of yourself in uniform on personal social media accounts, or anything that identifies you as a Police officer is not recommended.
- Don't use your personal email address or phone number for Police social media accounts.
- Don't post anything that can bring Police into disrepute or negatively impact the reputation of Police (i.e. anything in breach of our [Code of Conduct](#)).
- Don't post anything that compromises your security or the security of family or colleagues (e.g. posting personal information such as phone numbers or addresses).
- Don't use Facebook as a channel to send unprompted messages to members of the public, e.g. we need your help – tracking someone down is for Intel. As anyone can set up a social media profile and claim to be a Police officer (via a non-NZ Police verified page), this kind of practice is a risk we need to avoid. If a member of the public has contacted Police (through Facebook for example), then it is OK as they have asked to be contacted.

Other relevant NZ Police policies and guidelines

The following are Police policies and guidelines that influence our social media policy. Please be aware of and comply with them. If you have questions about the policies, get in touch with those responsible for the policy.

- [Police media policy](#).
- Be familiar and comply with Police instructions that apply to traditional communication methods as these also apply to communication via social media:
 - [Releasing information to the media](#)
 - [Community disclosure of offender information](#)
 - [Sub judice](#)

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- [Wanted persons postings](#)
- [Missing persons](#)
- [Crime Prevention Cameras \(CCTV\) in Public Places](#)
- [Filming Operations Policy](#).

Page use

- PNHQ Media and Communications (via [REDACTED]) must have admin rights to all Police related pages/social media accounts to ensure every Police page meets Police's standards, to post on behalf of districts (for operations and to post wanted and missing people etc.) and to manage campaigns and project work.
- Seek permission from the National Manager Marketing Communications before creating any new social media accounts or pages on any of the available social media platforms.
- Be aware of, and take steps to manage risks of:
 - loss of control over data and images
 - identity fraud and fake accounts
 - viruses, hacking and unauthorised access to Police accounts
 - creating an electronic footprint (in covert settings).

The public are entitled to express their own opinions, but messages that are obscene, offensive, or in breach of the platform terms and conditions should be hidden or removed. People who post offensive material should be blocked from using the site.

Content and private messaging

- Ensure that all legitimate private messages (spam excluded) are responded to as quickly as possible. **Police's expectation is that all messages will be responded to within 24 hours.**
- Usually, DCC's are responsible for monitoring and replying to private Facebook messages in districts.
- Ensure that your page/account is free from any hate speech, dangerous or misleading communication or instances where an individual's privacy is breached.

Page moderation and comments

Responsibility for moderating and monitoring comments on District Facebook pages sits with the social media admin staff from each district. While Media and Communications social media and media staff can assist with monitoring comments on District posts, the expectation is that overall ownership needs to be managed by the districts.

It is expected that all posts are monitored daily. Individual staff members are responsible for monitoring and replying to comments on their own posts. Moderation and monitoring of inappropriate comments is especially relevant for 'Wanted' Posts.

Negative comments and conversations on our social media pages runs the risk of impacting Police trust and confidence.

Media and Communications reserve the right to delete or hide content that is not being moderated, in order to protect the brand and reputation of Police.

Requests to the Media Centre

The Police Media Centre post to District Facebook pages on behalf of DCCs and investigation staff. These posts are usually in regard to WTAs, missing people, returning stolen property and ID requests. Before contacting the Media Centre with a Facebook request, you need to have approval from you manager or DCC and have exhausted all avenues of inquiry (see below re [Wanted posts](#)).

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Please note the Media Centre is not resourced to monitor every Facebook post. **All posts made by the Media Centre on behalf of DCCs remain the responsibility of the requesting staff member and they need to monitor the post and comments.**

After the requested post has been successful the staff member who requested the post is responsible for letting the Media Centre know so the post can be removed where appropriate.

When sending a post to the Media team, please crop your photos and attach as a JPEG file. CCTV footage must be edited and ready to be published. Any innocent people who are visible in the footage but not linked in any way to the crime need to be cropped out, blurred – or have given permission for the video to be shared.

If the post is in regard to a missing person the staff member making the request needs to ensure the family are aware and comfortable with this, please also check how much information they are happy to share. E.g. are they happy to confirm their father has dementia, or is that information they would prefer to keep private?

Be aware that the media scan our Facebook pages constantly and will often take the information straight off the page and publish it.

If you have any questions about Facebook post requests by the media team, call or email the Police Media Centre team on extension 41222 or on media@police.govt.nz.

Wanted posts

In relation to 'Wanted' posts, the following guidance applies:

- There must be some urgency – the person wanted should be considered a risk to staff or the public and **apprehending them is a matter of urgency.**
- Consideration must be given to the likelihood of the photograph encouraging trolling. Does the person's appearance suggest there'll be negative/bullying commentary and will that detract from the purpose of the post?
- Posts should be made in consultation with DCC and/or a supervisor and all posts are to be sent to the NCCC for sign-off.

In general, the decision to go public with a wanted photo should be a last resort, rather than a first step. As per the guidance for wanted postings in [Police Instructions](#), an image of a person may only be posted if that person cannot reasonably be located by other means. Enquiries undertaken to locate the wanted person must have failed, and/or there are compelling reasons to publicise the image without delay.

Filming guidelines for social media

When filming (video) for social media use, there are a number of guidelines and risks associated with this kind of content – some due to legal requirements, some due to NZ Police Policy, and some based on best practice (and what can be expected in the social media environment).

Please follow the [Social media filming guidelines](#). These guidelines are largely based on information from Response & Operations, Legal, and our reality TV involvement.

Live streaming

Live streaming on Facebook should not be used as a tool for day to day engagement with followers – that is what regular posts, still imagery, and video content is for. The same policy applies for Instagram Live and other any live streaming platforms. This is because Police have no ability to moderate live streaming posts, therefore video is the preferred engagement option.

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There may be specific occasions or approved police events where Facebook live can be used but you must get permission in advance from the Marketing and Communications Manager. In general, live streams will be considered for events such as:

- High profile media conferences on a major critical incident involving Police
- High profile national events, e.g. significant award ceremony.

Use of music and sound tracks

Any music use in social media videos (or any video in fact) needs to be royalty free, or have copy right clearance from the producer of the music. Getting permission for the use of (well-known and recognisable) music is likely to come at a very high cost and will be a timely process in getting permission. Use of music without permission from the publisher can result in legal (and expensive) outcomes.

Sites that offer royalty free music that can be used for social media videos include

- [Premium beat](#)
- [Audio Jungle](#)
- [Audio network](#)
- [Free Music Archive](#)
- [Moby Gratis.](#)

If you have any specific copyright use questions, contact the Police legal team.

Branding and tone of voice

Ensure the social media account you're managing uses Police's current branding, appropriate imagery, and tone of how we speak.

Approach the National Manager Marketing Communications if you'd like assistance. Ensure your posts follow our desired social media tone of voice 'thinking friendly older sibling'.

It is expected that all Police responses to questions and comments (including provision of advice and guidance) will have this desired positive and supportive tone. Interactions online should be respectful, not sarcastic or argumentative.

In general, posts should not be attributable to individual staff members, this ensures the longevity of accounts, protects staff privacy, and that NZ Police is maintained as the hero brand with a consistent voice.

Posting photos of Police employees

Verbal consent must be sought before posting photos of police staff on Police social media accounts. Check that consent has been given by staff before sharing new media posts featuring Police employees.

Privacy

- Comply with the [Privacy Act 1993](#). Do not post personal information online without the individual's consent unless it is necessary for a Police function (such as trying to locate an offender, or identify a person in an image for the purposes of an investigation). Make sure anything posted is accurate (and not misleading) and up to date.
- Treat information received through social media in the same way as you treat information provided through traditional channels. For example, make sure it is stored appropriately, and retained (or disposed of), in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1993](#), the [Public Records Act 2005](#), the [Criminal Disclosure Act 2008](#), and the [Police records management policies](#).

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Politically neutral/areas for comment

- Avoid posting content that could conflict with our organisational messaging, provides comment on national policies, our operating model or brings Police into disrepute.
- All posted content must be politically neutral.

Using social media for overt and covert investigations

When using social media overtly in an investigation, requests for information can be made directly to the social media organisation. Staff can also consult the National Cyber Crime Centre (NC3) on ext. [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] - number not for public use.

If you are using social media covertly in an investigation you must obtain the approval of the National Criminal Investigations Group at PNHQ. Please read the 'Covert telecommunications' section in the '[Covert backstopping](#)' chapter for more information.

Social media may be used for other purposes, such as negotiating or to spread reassurance during tactical operations. Before doing so, contact the appropriate business group for advice:

- For negotiations, contact your local Police Negotiation Team.
- For tactical operations, contact the Media Centre.