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Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-1740  
Date: 09 September 2022



## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002**

I refer to your recent request for information which has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response.

**I would like to request some information regarding practices and policies for your Police when using social media.**

**1. Please could you disclose any such use policies that your officers are obliged to follow**

Having considered your request, I must advise that I have interpreted your question to refer to the use of a personal mobile phone.

In response to your question, firstly I can suggest that you may find the Information Security Standard Operating Procedure which is publically available useful. By way of assistance I have attached the link below.

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/3hxolb3p/information-security-sop.pdf>

Additionally, I have extracted the paragraph below from divisional guidance relating to Use of Personal Mobile Whilst on Duty.

*Officers must not, at any time (whether on or off duty), post comments on any social media site in relation to their duties or details of any incident that they have attended or have knowledge of (operational information).*

*Any officer who discloses operational information wittingly or unwittingly may be liable to criminal charges under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018 or subject to Police Service of Scotland (Conduct) Regulations 2014.*

Further, the information below has been extracted from guidance document called Online Safety Guidance for Police Officers & Members of Police Staff.

- *Never identify yourself as Police Scotland personnel.*
- *You should not discuss work related topics on open forum/ social network sites or say anything which undermines Police Scotland.*
- *Do not share your work email address or telephone number on your social media profile.*

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Finally the information below has been extracted from a guidance document called Manual of Guidance on Internet Investigations, the section is titled Personal Use of the Internet and Social Media.

### ***Personal Use of the Internet & Social Media***

*Whilst this document is aimed at providing guidance regarding the use of the internet for a policing purpose, it is important to understand that, in order to protect the privacy of officers and maintain evidential and professional integrity, we must use separate Social Media and internet accounts for policing purposes from those used for personal social networking.*

*Whilst PSoS do not seek to prohibit its employees from using Social Network Websites, it does ask that you be mindful of the following points:*

- *PSoS prohibit its employees from using force systems to access Social Media websites for personal / private use.*
- *Do not use your force email address to register for any personal / private accounts.*
- *Remember that the same obligations apply to social networking online as they do in every other aspects of your social life.*
- ***You** have a duty of confidentiality regarding work issues.*
- ***You** must not do anything that would bring discredit to the Police Service.*
- *Social Media Websites are **NOT** private. Whilst you can apply some security settings to your profile, it is not possible to confirm how secure these might be. You should consider that when you post information or photos onto the internet you have lost control of them and other people can do whatever they want with it.*
- *Defence Legal Teams, Criminals, and Journalists are all known to use the internet to research police activity and find information about police employees. **Do not** disclose any information that has the potential to compromise you or your family's safety, or cause you professional embarrassment.*

### **2. Please disclose any Police sanctioned social media accounts on:**

**-Reddit**

**-Facebook**

**-Instagram**

In response to your request I can advise that Police Scotland have no official accounts on Reddit.

Police Scotland have a single official account on Instagram, @policescotlandofficial and there are 23 Facebook accounts, listed below.

#### Police Scotland Official Facebook accounts:

Police Scotland  
Edinburgh Police Division  
Argyll & West Dunbartonshire Police Division  
Ayrshire Police Division  
Dumfries Galloway Police Division  
East Lothian Police

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Fife Police Division  
Forth Valley Police Division  
Greater Glasgow Police Division  
Highlands & Islands Police Division  
Lanarkshire Police Division  
Lothians & Scottish Borders Police Division  
Midlothian Police  
North East Police Division  
Police Scotland Volunteers  
Renfrewshire & Inverclyde Police Division  
Safety Cameras Scotland  
Scottish Borders Police  
Szkocka Policja  
Tayside Police Division  
That Guy Scotland  
Violence Reduction Unit Scotland  
West Lothian Police

**3. What are your policies regarding members of the Police providing legal advice guidance to 3rd parties not involved in their day to day activities?**

**4. What liabilities have been considered with regards to such legal guidance and its likely conflict of interest?**

**5. Would a police office be allowed within your policies and guidance to moderate (run) a legal advice guidance page?**

In response to your three questions above I must advise that in terms of Section 17 of the Act, I can confirm that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

By way of explanation, no guidance is held that would specifically answer the questions asked.

In order to be of assistance you may find the following links regarding Police Scotland's standards of professional behaviour and the Business Interests and Secondary Employment standard operating procedure useful.

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/who-we-are/our-standards-of-professional-behaviour/>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/policies-and-procedures/standard-operating-procedures/standard-operating-procedures-a-b/>

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management quoting the reference number given.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which Police Scotland has dealt with your request, you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of our actions and decisions.

Your request must specify the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction and it must be submitted within 40 working days of receiving this response - either by email to

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[foi@scotland.police.uk](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of that review, you are thereafter entitled to apply to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. You can apply [online](#), by email to [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by post to Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision, there is an appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, an anonymised version of this response will be posted to the Police Scotland Freedom of Information [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.