

# **Pasco Sheriff's Office Social Media Plan**

## **Overview:**

Social media is an incredible tool that cannot be ignored any longer. The speed at which individuals communicate has changed in the last several years as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and an assortment of other social media networks continue to crop up. The Pasco Sheriff's Office seeks to remain at the forefront of this community engagement by engaging followers on social media.

The goal of the Sheriff's Office social media is to show individuals what the Sheriff's Office faces each day out on shift and to also inform the public of Sheriff's Office actions while humanizing those who wear the badge every day. As such, the Sheriff's Office social media plan is a combination of fact based information, humanizing tweets, and showing a lighter side to social media with the ultimate goal of informing and building our audience. Regardless of why an individual chooses to follow the Sheriff's Office, they will receive our information and be aware of any changes in their community. It is important to remember that each and every post serves to educate and promote our standing in the community.

The Sheriff's Office currently is most active on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook, an ever growing medium that skews towards a slightly older audience, is not used as frequently as Twitter but does receive more fact based and community based posts as described below in the "Should I post..." section. Facebook does not receive engagement, GIFs, or trending topics but it is a tool to push out safety information, arrests, and humanizing efforts such as Behind the

Badge posts or Get to Know the PSO. Facebook, however, is not designed for constant interaction and should be viewed as a medium through which to PUSH OUT information and not interact with those who receive information. There is no target for how much to post on Facebook each day as the content may vary greatly depending on the information that is available to push out every day.

Twitter, on the other hand, is a medium of engagement. In addition to the “Should I post...” section below Twitter is also a tool for engagement and interaction. It is encouraged that questions are answered and that engagement is created to have a discussion with people regarding their Sheriff’s Office and what type of actions the Sheriff’s Office is undertaking. In addition, off topic discussions as discussed below such as sporting events or trending topics are also to be utilized to continue reaching and growing the audience. Twitter, though, can be overused so it is important to make sure tweets do not become stale or are not posted too often or you can result in losing followers in the long run.

In all cases, though, the ultimate goal of the Pasco Sheriff’s Office social media team is to inform, connect, and engage with their followers.

The Pasco Sheriff’s Office will have routinely scheduled posts, which are described below:

- “Behind the Badge” where a member of the Sheriff’s Office is interviewed each Monday with their story and picture posted on Facebook and Twitter. This interview should not always be related to the Sheriff’s Office but should tell the member’s story, how they got

involved in law enforcement, and other types of interests. This helps humanize our members and show a different side to them that not everyone always gets to see.

- These posts will be written by a PIO and provided for posting.
  - Once these are posted on Facebook and Twitter, the Facebook link should be sent to the IT designee for posting under the recent news banner
- “Get to Know Your PSO” where a unit of the Sheriff’s Office is highlighted for Facebook and Twitter on Wednesdays to educate and inform the public of all of the functions of the Sheriff’s Office. This should not just focus on road patrol units that are most familiar to the public but should include corrections and support roles that may not always be as visible to the public.
  - These posts will be written by a PIO and provided for posting.
  - Once these are posted on Facebook and Twitter, the Facebook link should be sent to the IT designee for posting under the recent news banner
- “Cold Case Thursday” where, in conjunction with Major Crimes and the Missing Person Unit, a feature is done on a different cold case each Thursday.
  - These cases are provided to us on a weekly basis by Cold Case detectives for posting
  - Once these are posted on Facebook and Twitter, the Facebook link should be sent to the IT designee for posting under the recent news banner

- Tweet Alongs to show the public what a typical shift looks like for a law enforcement officer and the types of calls that we would typically respond to. These tweet alongs should always be scheduled in conjunction with the District Captains.
  - o Our goal is to have one Tweet Along per week though this may vary depending on the availability of units to ride with and the opinion of the District Captains
  - o As with other posts as described below, Tweet Alongs should be interrupted if necessitated by emergency events. The on call PIO or Assistant Executive Director will make the decision on when these should be suspended
  
- A weekly newscast for Facebook and Twitter that informs the public of what is going on in the Sheriff's Office and provides a weekly summary.
  - o This is created by our PIO staff and will be posted by them, as well, on both Facebook and Twitter
  
- The #9PMRoutine
  - o This is posted each night on Facebook and Twitter at #9PMRoutine using the designed graphic. This is a reminder each night for people to lock their doors not only in Pasco County but across the country.
    - The #9PMRoutine begins with interactions at roughly 7:30PM. As many real time engagements as possible on Twitter should be encouraged as people are responding to us that they have locked their doors. The response should be quote tweeted, with a comment made from the Sheriff's Office telling them "great job" or "breaking the triangle of crime" or other responses along with the #9PMRoutine hashtag

- In addition, the Pasco Sheriff's Office uses a map application on cell phones to "fill in" a map of states that have responded with the #9PMRoutine that night. This map should be posted throughout the night to update people on what states have "checked in" and encourage further engagement.

In addition to these routinely scheduled posts for Facebook and Twitter, for Twitter alone several regularly trending topics can be used as content is needed, provided the rules below in "Should I post..." are adhered to:

- #TriviaTuesday where prizes can be handed out and engagement created
  - Prizes can include hats, keychains, and other giveaways that are available
  - All giveaways should be approved through the Assistant Executive Director before they are placed on social media
- #TalkingTuesday where followers can interact and ask questions or a law enforcement agency (though we must be careful to not talk about specific cases in these regards)
  - For #TalkingTuesday, any law enforcement related questions should be directed to a Crime Prevention Corporal, if they are available, or to a Captain if a Crime Prevention Corporal is unavailable
- #ThrowbackThursday where the history of the Sheriff's Office or older pictures can be reposted (though below rules should be followed)

- #FlashbackFriday same as above but on Friday instead of Thursday

With these type of posts in mind, and realizing that social media is never finite, a set of rules below can be established as a broad guideline, realizing that for some instances a full discussion is required as not all posts will fit in a set of black and white rules and policies. It is important that judgement is used in any post to make sure that it could not reflect negatively on the agency.

In addition, if an individual tells you to post something because the Sheriff/Colonel/Executive Director wanted it posted, we should always verify that with the individual and, if there are concerns regarding the post, those concerns should be voiced before posting. In addition, in these cases, the Executive Director should always be consulted before posting whatever the content is.

In all cases, however, we must also adhere and be aware of public records laws and the agency's social media policy.

## **What Should Be Posted/Posting Guidelines:**

While social media is always adjusting, basic principles can be followed to make sure we meet our goals on social media.

In addition, the format as noted below should always be followed and information should always be requested to be sent to the PIO account ([PIO@pascosheriff.org](mailto:PIO@pascosheriff.org)) so that all of our PIOs have access to the same information in case there are any questions. This message to use the PIO account will also regularly be shared with Captains to insure the information is being properly relayed down the chain.

### **- An arrest?**

- **Yes**, BUT we should not editorialize on that arrest and any pictures should be either the person arrested, a picture of the scene, or the mug shot.
- We should also use discretion in arrests and the posting of them, we will not identify juveniles, unless they are violent offenders
  - While juvenile arrests ARE public record and can be released if requested, it is our policy to NOT post those on social media unless they are violent offenders or we are specifically requested by the Sheriff/Colonel/Executive Director to post
- Care should be taken, as well, to insure active investigation details are not provided in arrests and contact should be made with the proper unit if there are any concerns regarding that

- *Example: John Smith was arrested for simple battery after deputies responded to reports he punched his neighbor. (Post on scene photo of John Smith in handcuffs in back of the car or mugshot)*
  
- **An on scene photo of someone who has been arrested?**
  - **Maybe**, does the photo show the person in a compromised situation, is it posed, or could the person claim that the picture is embarrassing or degrading to them?
    - If so, then **no**, we can wait for the mugshot
  - *Yes Example: John Smith was arrested and the responding deputies took a picture of John Smith in the back of the car (Post this)*
  - *No Example: John Smith was arrested and the responding deputies took a picture of John Smith while he was crying/they were holding him up/posted with several deputies with thumbs up (DO NOT POST AND WAIT FOR MUG SHOT)*
  
- **Other on scene photos?**
  - **Maybe**, these pictures should be tasteful and serve a purpose or advance a message of the Sheriff's Office. However, they should not be in poor form or tasteless and must follow the other rules as outlined in this social media plan.
  
- **It's a positive engagement with the community?**
  - **Yes**, absolutely. The more the merrier.
  - *Example: 8-year-old Bobby provided our deputies with lemonade (Post with photo)*



- HOWEVER, we should always trust but verify with stories we receive. If you receive a story from a deputy, unless it is a fact based arrest, call or email, make sure that the information we receive is 100% accurate before we push it out
  
- **It's a funny story?**
  - Does this funny story result in an arrest?
    - Yes, follow the same protocols as an arrest and do not editorialize or provide anything other than the facts
    - *Example: Deputies responded to a scene where John Smith reportedly struck his neighbor after his neighbor threw his cat at him. John Smith was arrested for battery (Post just the facts, do not editorialize)*
  - Does this funny story not result in an arrest?
    - Do not post
    - *Example: Deputies responded to a scene where John Smith and his neighbor were attempting to get John's cat out of a tree but they got stuck themselves (DO NOT POST)*
  
- **It's a picture of our deputies?**
  - **Yes**, as long as the picture would not be embarrassing or reflect poorly on the Sheriff's Office
  - *Yes Example: Several of deputies saw each other while they were eating lunch, here's a group shot (Post this)*

- *No Example: One of our deputies chose to pose shirtless while waiting for the next call (DO NOT POST)*

- **In Memory of?**

- **Yes**, when a deputy is killed in the line of duty across the world and a member of the staff sees the news, we will post an in memory of to them and honor their sacrifice

- **BOLOs and Missing Persons?**

- **Yes**, we will post BOLOs as requested by deputies and detectives, as long as they request the information is published, or if we feel there is a public safety concern we will be proactive in pushing these out.
  - It is important to verify the information in BOLOs we receive, though, and that the information is relayed properly on social media. When questions exist, contact should be made to verify the information.
  - BOLOs that come during the Social Media Coordinator's shift at the Real Time Crime Center should be verified with the Real Time Crime Center before they are shared and the Social Media Coordinator should also immediately alert the PIO on call that this information is being posted and make sure it is shared with the PIO on call should the media call with any questions or need additional information.

- The Real Time Crime Center will also have a list of information that we will push out which includes but is not limited to major traffic incidents, scenes with perimeters, and crime trends
- We will also continue to post all missing and endangered persons that we receive
- We only post official BOLOs, if a private individual has put together a BOLO of a missing pet or person, for example, these would not be shared without approval from the Sheriff, Colonel, or Executive Director
  - BOLOs should be cropped to just the picture
- These should be posted after hours by the on call PIO to both Facebook and Twitter, we should always use both outlets as we have a diverse audience who use multiple platforms

- **Events?**

- Only official, approved Sheriff's Office events are automatically posted
- If we receive a request to post an outside event where the Sheriff's Office is not affiliated, these should be routed to the Sheriff, Colonel, or Executive Director for their approval before posting
- In addition, events as assigned by the Sheriff/Colonel/Executive Director can also be live tweeted when they are assigned

- **Body Camera Footage?**

- **Yes**, provided the footage shows our deputies acting in a good light with professionalism and care and follows all applicable public records laws and general orders
- This should not be abused, we should use this to show tense situations that highlight the risks our deputies take every day such as them facing an armed suspect, dealing with a dangerous individual, or on a K9 track
- We should follow the same standards as posting an on scene photo and also make sure that we are always keeping legal in the loop with these type of requests

- **Press Conferences?**

- **Yes**, we will live tweet all press conferences and also put them on Facebook Live so our audience can be aware of what the Sheriff's Office is working on

- **Tweet Alongs?**

- Yes, provided the rules of posting pictures of deputies and on scene photos are followed.
- These are important features that show what a typical shift is like for our deputies and provides some insight into their work

- **Road Closures?**

- **Yes**, and these should be reshared every 10-15 minutes on Twitter if requested or if it is a major thoroughfare where traffic could be severely impacted

- **Emergency management information?**
  - **Yes**, any type of information put out regarding flooding, severe weather, fires, or other emergency management purposes can and should be reused and posted on all of the official Sheriff's Office accounts. If it is a critical situation such as a fast moving fire or a hurricane, this information should be reposted every 10-15 minutes on Twitter
  - **If possible** reach out to the district captain or those on scene to obtain photos to accompany these posts
  
- **What about other posts?**
  - GIFs are appropriate for Twitter ONLY, but all GIFs should be thoroughly vetted to make sure that there is no inappropriate content in the background or deep in the GIF
    - These are never appropriate to use when discussing an arrest or any type of critical Sheriff's Office business but can be used to engage followers in non-critical related business such as the #9PMRoutine or discussing trending topics
  - Trending Topics
    - Trending Topics should be thoroughly vetted to make sure they are not overtly political or controversial in nature before the Sheriff's Office Twitter account participates in a discussion around them

- We do not want to inadvertently draw our Twitter account into a political discussion by not fully understanding what the hashtag we are using actually means
- Videos
  - Videos produced at the direction of the Sheriff should always be posted in the schedule as prescribed by the Sheriff
  - Crime prevention videos or other videos can also be posted as long as the previous rules are followed and they serve a Sheriff's Office purpose of educating the public or showing them the routine of a deputy and that applicable laws and rules are followed regarding public records
- Engagement
  - Followers can be engaged with, but the quoted tweet from the follower should not contain curse words and the engagement should be fun and lighthearted to further positive images of the Sheriff's Office
    - In addition, the username of the person should be considered and overly political, offensive, or overly religious usernames or those with memes in their username that are overly political, offensive, or overly religious should not be engaged with
    - Further, an individual who mentions guns or "locking and loading" should not be engaged with, either, as there are possible safety concerns in those regards depending on the context

- Replies should never be rude or condescending
  - When a citizen sends us a tweet with a concern they should be directed with the contact information for the proper office to address their concern
- Unrelated posts
    - These are posts that are not Sheriff's Office related in any way including lunch, good morning, Holidays, sporting events, and other type of posts
      - These posts are determined on a case by case basis and should be discussed but the goal of these posts, always, are to paint the Sheriff's Office and its members as humans who have other interests, this is an important part of humanizing the badge and should be utilized
      - No matter what the content, ALL OTHER rules must be followed to insure the post stays within the decorum established by the Sheriff's Office
      - Overtly religious holidays and messages should be avoided to concerns expressed by various groups

## **Format of Posts:**

When it comes to social media, Facebook should be treated as much as possible as an official news source. Exceptions to this include event flyers and regular features that are heavily graphic such as the #9PMRoutine. Other than those exceptions, all posts on Facebook should be treated as official news and include the date and time of the event, the first and last name of all people in the story at least once, the location of the event, and a general synopsis. This is a general AP format and should be followed.

In addition, it is important to read posts for grammatical errors and misspellings and to not just copy and post a report received in whole. Often, those reports have misspellings and grammatical errors that should be cleaned up before the story is posted to any social media.

Twitter, with its character limits, is different and posts can be edited to fit the character requirements, linking to the full Facebook post is also acceptable or clipping the Facebook post and posting it as a picture on Twitter.

It is important that we ask these questions, though, before posting as we want to, as much as possible, provide a complete story that can perhaps garner attention and use for other outlets.

Again, with this in mind, it is important to verify all details in a story before it is posted with the consideration and acknowledgement that this is official news that is being released. As we



would with any other type of media, details matter and we want our stories to be true and accurate depictions of what happened.

## **Timing of Posts:**

The Sheriff's Office aims to be engaging with the public. As such, on Twitter, posts should be made at least once every half hour, if not more frequent for emergency situations or information that needs to be pushed out or during the #9PMRoutine when posts should be made at least every 15 minutes. This schedule can be changed at the discretion of the Executive Director, Sheriff, Colonel, or their designee.

Facebook, as discussed, does not have a designated schedule like Twitter and should only be updated with the #9PMRoutine, regular features, and crime and arrest information as necessary and requested.

Weekdays, Monday through Friday, schedule (except as directed otherwise due to emergency situation):

*6:30AM- First Tweet (typically some type of good morning tweet)*

*7:00AM-7:30PM- Content as described above/BOLOs/Arrests/Pictures every half hour*

*8:00-10:15PM- Tweets about the #9PMRoutine encouraging people to participate every 15 minutes plus engagements in real time as they come in along with updating the #9PMRoutine map graphic*

*10:30PM- Final Tweet (typically some type of good night tweet)*

Weekends, Saturday and Sunday, schedule (except as directed otherwise due to emergency situation):

*7:30AM- First Tweet (typically some type of good morning tweet)*

*8:00AM-7:30PM- Content as described above/BOLOs/Arrests/Pictures every half hour*

*8:00-10:15PM- Tweets about the #9PMRoutine encouraging people to participate every 15 minutes plus engagements in real time as they come in along with updating the #9PMRoutine map graphic*

*10:30PM- Final Tweet (typically some type of good night tweet)*

The Social Media Coordinator on duty each day is responsible for scheduling the tweets for the following morning using Hootsuite, where the Pasco Sheriff's Office has an account. As the Social Media Coordinator goes off duty at 11PM, they are responsible, before they leave, for scheduling tweets between 6:30AM and 11AM on weekdays and between 7:30AM and 11AM on weekends.

The early morning tweets should also, sometime between 7:00AM and 8:00AM include a reference to the Sheriff's office #BePositivePasco campaign and use an uplifting graphic for that feature.

In all instances, however, scheduled posts **MUST** be taken down when an emergency situation arises. One of our worst fears is pushing out information on an officer involved shooting or during a press conference only to have a tweet scheduled about coffee pop up in the feed. It is

the responsibility of all involved to insure this does not happen and extra care and caution needs to be given to remember Hootsuite and scheduled tweets and posts.

In addition, **ALL** posts, including the #9PMRoutine take a backseat to critical information, press conferences, and responding to scenes. These calls will be made in conjunction with the Assistant Executive Director and the on call PIO.

## **Real Time Crime Center:**

Part of the role of social media is working in conjunction with the Real Time Crime Center, as discussed above in the guidelines of what to post and what not to post. The Social Media Coordinator will be based in the Real Time Crime Center during part of their shift as prescribed by the Assistant Executive Director who is their direct supervisor.

Posting information from the Real Time Crime Center will follow the rules and procedures laid out above, however, if the on call PIO or Assistant Executive Director makes contact with the Social Media Coordinator and requests posting stop or states that the on call PIO or Assistant Executive Director is taking over posting, those requests must be honored and any additional information provided after that should come from the on call PIO or Assistant Executive Director who will take over posting to social media channels.

## **Creating Engagement:**

Creating engagement on Twitter is one of the main focuses of the Pasco Sheriff's Office social media plan. Twitter has an algorithm that ranks accounts and posts better or worse, impacting how often they show up and if they appear in sections such as "What you may have missed" and recommended people to follow. This algorithm is partially based on engagements with a specific tweet or with tweets from an account over time to include retweets, replies, and likes, in addition, for live video, views are also considered in this algorithm and the frequency of live videos.

As such, posts need to be drafted on a frequent basis that encourage this type of engagement. Posts should ask for replies such as caption contests, retweets, and likes. In addition, if a live video is not imminent and one has not occurred recently, live videos on Facebook and Twitter should be created to keep the algorithm current so we do not lose our advantage just because a press conference has not occurred.

## **Responding to Messages:**

Facebook and Twitter should be responded to as time allows. We aim to not be a repository on crime information so responses to messages should be directed to contact Customer Service ([css@pascosheriff.org](mailto:css@pascosheriff.org)) or provided the link to our crime tips webpage.

Regarding messages where neither of those replies are appropriate, a discussion should be had with the Assistant Executive Director on the proper response.

**Nextdoor:**

While Facebook and Twitter have been largely the focus of this social media plan, the Pasco Sheriff's Office also has an account on the website Nextdoor.com that allows us to push information out at the neighborhood levels. These posts should be exact copies of information pushed out on Facebook just targeted to specific neighborhoods or areas.

However, we do not engage with anyone on Nextdoor and merely push out the information and respond to questions in messages. Nextdoor also does not participate in the #9PMRoutine as that is a function of Facebook and Twitter.



## **Hashtag Glossary:**

The Pasco Sheriff's Office utilizes several hashtags that come from self-created marketing campaigns. These hashtags should be incorporated into posts often:

**#BePositivePasco:** An initiative created by the Sheriff that is used every morning to encourage people to do something nice for their neighbor and have a positive attitude. This hashtag is accompanied by an uplifting graphic as a way for people to begin their days.

**#PascoProud:** This hashtag was actually created by Tax Collector Mike Fasano but it is one we use often, as well. This hashtag should be used often when pictures of our deputies are shown with the community or when we receive support from the community and when we post about that support. This is often combined with **#YourSupportMatters**.

**#YourSupportMatters:** This hashtag is often combined with **#PascoProud** and is used when we receive a donation from the community or a thank you from the community.

**#WeFightAsOne:** The motto of the Sheriff's Office in hashtag form. This is often used in the same way as **#YourSupportMatters**.

**#MoveToPasco:** A campaign that was begun by the Sheriff and encourages people to apply for a job with the Pasco Sheriff's Office. This hashtag is combined with a nice picture, typically of the sky or a sunset, and always includes a link to the Pasco Sheriff's Office careers page, [PascoSheriff.com/Careers](https://PascoSheriff.com/Careers), as we want to drive people to apply for the agency.

#JoinPSO: Sometimes, this is combined with #MoveToPasco, but is never used on its own. It is used to ask people to join the Pasco Sheriff's Office and to come work for us.

#9PMRoutine: The nightly reminder to ask people to lock their doors and help break the triangle of crime. This is used every night and every post about the #9PMRoutine and every engagement with people during the #9PMRoutine should be tagged with this hashtag.