

VICKSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT
Law Enforcement
Policies and Procedures

Subject: Dissemination of Harmful Information	Policy Number: 3.24
Issue Date: February 2, 2026	
Approval Authority Title and Signature: The Board of Mayor and Aldermen, Police Chief Larry Burns	

POLICY

To protect employee dignity, preserve public trust, and maintain operational effectiveness by preventing the creation and dissemination of unverified, knowingly false, confidential, harmful, or malicious information about the Vicksburg Police Department personnel or operations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all sworn officers, civilian employees, contractors, volunteers, and interns while on duty, representing the Vicksburg Police Department, using Department resources, or when engaging in off duty conduct reasonably impacts workplace harmony or public trust. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict lawfully protected speech.

DEFINITIONS

Harmful: content that causes injury, loss, or disadvantage, promotes suicide, self-harm, eating disorders, substance abuse, stalking, bullying, sexual exploitation, incites violence, harassing or material detrimental to another person.

Improper Dissemination of Information: the sharing or repeating of *unverified, private, or derogatory information* regarding Department personnel or operations where such dissemination reasonably undermines operational effectiveness, confidentiality, employee safety, or public trust.

Malicious Information: Knowingly false statements or communications made with intent of harming an employee's reputation, safety or the Department.

RESTRICTED LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA

This data shall not be duplicated, disclosed, or discussed without the written permission of this agency. Data subject to this restriction is contained throughout this publication.

Protected reporting: Good-faith reporting of misconduct of misconduct, unlawful behavior, policy violations, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, or safety concerns.

POLICY STATEMENT

All sworn officers, civilian employees, contractors, volunteers, and interns are prohibited from creating, sharing, or amplifying unverified, private, or derogatory information regarding Department personnel or operations. Protected reporting is not a violation. This policy targets conduct, not viewpoint. The sharing of malicious and harmful information which constitutes improper dissemination of information is strictly prohibited

EXAMPLES OF IMPROPER DISSEMINATION (NON-EXHAUSTIVE):

Conduct that may constitute improper dissemination under this policy includes, but not limited to:

1. Disseminating unverified and/or knowingly false inaccurate information regarding personnel matters, investigations, or Department operations, which includes creating, forwarding, or amplifying rumors.
2. Using Department email, messaging, or social media to circulate unverified allegations.
3. Sharing confidential personnel records, including doxxing or releasing private identifying information.
4. Retaliating against any individual for making a report, filing a grievance, or participating in an investigation.

Important: Protected reporting of misconduct is explicitly safeguarded.

REPORTING, INVESTIGATION, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

1. **Reporting:** Alleged violations may be reported to Internal Affairs Division or the Human Resources Department. Anonymous reports are accepted via a standard intake form.
2. **Investigation:** Any complaints of violations shall be logged and investigated promptly and impartially and in accordance with City of Vicksburg Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

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3. **Confidentiality & Non-retaliation:** Information will be handled confidentially to the extent permitted. Retaliation is strictly prohibited and subject to discipline.

DISCIPLINE

- I. Violations of this Dissemination of Information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Disciplinary measures shall be applied as follows:
 - a. First Offense: Coaching
 - b. Second Offense: Mediation
 - c. Third Offense: Written Reprimand
 - d. Fourth Offense: Suspension
 - e. Fifth Offense: Termination
- II. There will be zero tolerance for malicious, defamatory, or safety-impacting conduct.
- III. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the Chief of Police, and Deputy Chief reserve the right to impose harsher penalties including immediate termination when the nature or severity of the violation warrants such action, even if it is a first offense. Discipline under this section shall be applied consistently with City disciplinary procedures and applicable due-process requirements.

TRAINING

All personnel must receive mandatory training on this policy:

1. At hire and annually thereafter;
2. Training will cover workplace civility, confidentiality, social media use, protected reporting, and the consequences of improper dissemination; and
3. Supervisors will receive additional coaching on early intervention, documentation, and enforcement.

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