

# STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

One survey indicates that 76 percent of police officers use social media to look for information about crimes.

See [wired.com/story/why-police-should-monitor-social-media-to-prevent-crime/](http://wired.com/story/why-police-should-monitor-social-media-to-prevent-crime/)

## HOW POLICE GAIN ACCESS TO YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

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- Public profiles - set your profile to private!
- Police create fake, realistic-looking profiles and send follow requests to you or your friends
- Verify: make sure that you know who operates the account before you accept! NEVER add people you do not know
- If police follow your friends they can see pictures of you, comments you leave, and posts you are tagged in



## WHAT LAW ENFORCEMENT LOOKS FOR

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- Posts or captions by a suspect to identify their location
- The geotag of a crime scene to look for profiles of people who have recently been there
- Facebook “statuses” or Instagram captions
- Photos of “contraband” (e.g., guns, drugs, or money)
- Gang terminology or colors
- If an officer does not immediately find something “suspicious,” they can continue to monitor an account



## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

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- Police can use social media information as evidence to secure warrants
- Police can use this information as evidence against you in court
- Police can use the list of people you follow to monitor and collect information on your friends (or use your friends' to track you!)
- Information can be kept in government files to be used against you in the future
- Police officers may also disclose the information they find on social media to federal agencies, including U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE)



## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

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- Do not allow tagged photos - remove any tags
- Disable geotags
- Do not post, send any messages, or make any comments about weapons, drugs, fighting, or any illegal activity
- Do not answer messages from people you do not know

