



USE OF THE INTERNET, INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ELECTRONIC MAIL & GENERAL USE OF PERSONAL COMPUTERS

PM-78-04

Section: 78-00, EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

I. PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of the policy on employee use of the internet, internal and external electronic mail, and general use of personal computers, afterward referred to as “internet, e-mail, and PC policy,” is to ensure that all use of the internet, internal and external e-mail, and personal computers:

- A. Is consistent with all applicable City, County, State, and federal laws and regulations;
- B. Supports employee productivity and professional development within an ethical and empowering work environment;
- C. Protects the City from liability arising from culpable miscommunication or other misuse of these resources; and
- D. Preserves the integrity and security of all personal computers hardware and software owned by the City and all information stored by means of such devices, as well as internet access and e-mail communications, the information obtained through them, and the communication produced by them.

II. SCOPE

- A. Applicability: The internet, e-mail, and PC policy covers all access to, and use of, any personal computer hardware and software owned by the City; access to, and use of, the City’s internal electronic mail network, and access to, and use of, any software, in use now or in the future, that enables transmission or reception of text, graphics, multimedia, program files, or other information on or across the internet.
- B. Employees: This policy applies to all City employees, at any grade or level, without exception as well as any temporary and contract employees and any other user of computer or other electronic equipment owned by the City. Throughout this document, all such persons will be referred to simply as “users.”



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- C. Conflict: If any provision of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy is found to be in conflict with existing city, state, or federal laws or regulations, or with City of Memphis Human Resources policies, those existing policies will supersede the conflicting provisions of this policy. All other provisions of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy will be in force.

III. POLICY

- A. General Provisions: All access to and use of personal computer hardware or software owned by the City, including internet, internal e-mail, and external e-mail, by any City employee, or contractor or temporary employee working for the City, or any other person with access to, and use of, City-owned equipment, will be conducted in an ethical, professional, and lawful manner, exclusively for business purposes in support of City operations, and not for personal use. Moreover, such use will be in accordance with safe and appropriate handling and use of PC hardware and software, so as not to damage the PC or the software operating on it.

1. No Harmful Use. User will not access or use these tools in any manner that breaches confidentiality of City business, legal, or other proprietary information, causes the City to come into disrepute because of false, injurious, slanderous, abusive, racist, sexist or other harmful communications, or that interferes with the timely and efficient performance of employees' duties or that threatens the integrity of the electronic equipment itself, e.g., because of files or viruses downloaded from the internet or opened in e-mail.
2. Not Private. Access to and use of City-owned personal computers is not to be construed as private, nor should the term "personal" in "personal computers" be interpreted as conferring the right of private use on the user. Moreover, no City employee-regular, temporary, grant, elected or contract-at any level, may regard any electronic communication, file, or other information, generated or received on a piece of City-owned electronic equipment, including PC's, as private, and thus, protected from inspection and review by the City. The



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City may elect to audit and review any information whatever, including all files stored on a user's PC and individual internal or external e-mails or history of internet access, by a user, at any time, without notice. Any information gathered by such audits or review may be used by the City to deal with violations of this policy and may become a part of the employee's personnel record.

3. Violations. Violations of this policy may result in sanctions up to and including revocation of all access to internet and e-mail, for employees at any level or grade, and even termination of employment, for City employees or cancellation of a contract, for contract employees.
4. Costs of Damages. User may be liable for any costs, e.g., to restore equipment, defend against legal actions brought against the City, etc., arising from violations of this policy.
5. Applicability. This policy applies to all access to, and use of, any PC owned by the City, whether or not the PC is connected to the City's internal or external e-mail network, or to the internet.
6. Revisions. The City may revise this policy, as necessary, to address emerging business, legal, and technology issues.
7. Proper Use Encouraged. The City *does* encourage any use of PC's, the internet, or e-mail that supports employee productivity, professional, development, and the City's business goals. Employees are encouraged to view these tools as legitimate and appropriate business and professional development and communication tools that can advance the City's mission and goals.

IV. PERSONAL COMPUTERS

Personal computers are microcomputers placed in the user's work area, with software installed to enable such office productivity functions as word processing, calculations with figures, preparation of graphical material,



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and other tasks. PCs may or may not be connected to peripheral devices, such as printers, or to an electronic network. The term “personal” should not be interpreted as conferring private rights of use or disposal, on the user. Specific provisions of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy applying to PCs are as follows:

- A. No Harm to PC Hardware: Users will use PC hardware in a reasonable and appropriate fashion, not subjecting the equipment to undue stress, either intentionally or with reckless disregard to the risk of damage to the equipment. Users will not remove parts or components of any kind from PC hardware, including speakers, to be taken away from City premises for personal use.
- B. Authorized Equipment Moves or Repairs: All moving of PCs from one location to another will be performed only by authorized PC Service Technicians from Information Systems. Similarly, all repairs or adjustments to equipment beyond the obvious capability of a user to perform (such as adjusting the view on the video monitor, for instance, with the user controls provided) will be performed only by authorized PC Service Technicians from Information Systems. Users will not attempt to make their own repairs or disassemble PC equipment for any reason.
- C. Audio Operation: Users will not operate the speakers on their PC equipment at a volume that disrupts or interferes with the work of other users.
- D. Authorized Software: Users will not seek to install any software other than what may be installed by authorized PC Service Technicians from Information Systems. In particular, users will not install recreational games on PCs.
- E. No copying of Software: User will not copy software installed on either their own or any other user’s PC since such copying may violate software copyrights and licensing agreements.
- F. No Modifying Software: Aside from using any built-in “user preference” features of software to choose such things as display colors, type



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fonts, icons, etc., users will not seek to alter or modify, in any way, any software installed on their PCs.

- G. Business Use Only: Users will use PCs only in a manner that supports or contributes to their work on behalf of the City. In particular, users will not use PCs to engage in, or support, businesses or other activities for personal financial gain.
- H. Individual Use Only: As a rule, each user will work only on the PC placed in his or her own work area. Exceptions may be made occasionally for sound business reasons. In general, users will not make their PCs available for the use of visitors or to other employees who may not be authorized to view sensitive or confidential City information stored on the user's PC.
- I. No Objectionable Use: Users will on no account use their PCs to obtain or store graphics, multimedia or text that promotes or advocates racism, sexism, pornography, violence, hatred of specific groups, such as religious groups, use of illegal substances, civil disobedience, or other illegal behavior. In particular, users will not use the video monitor display screen on their PCs to display objectionable or inappropriate graphics or text, especially graphics or text that would contribute to a sexist, racist, or otherwise hostile work environment.
- J. Review and Inspection: Authorized representatives of the City may access the user's PC at any time, with or without the user's knowledge, to inspect or copy any files whatsoever on the PC, and any information gathered from such inspections or retrieval may be used to deal with violations of this policy. Users may be required to furnish passwords to assist with such inspection.

V. INTERNET ACCESS

Internet access is access to text, graphics, and programs on the world-wide web, in other words, on computer file server outside the City's control. Such access is enabled through software associated with internet protocols, e.g., Microsoft Internet Explorer™ or similar software. Specific provisions of the internet, email, and PC policy applying to internet access are as follows:



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- A. Authorized Software: Users will not seek to install any internet access software other than what may be installed by authorized PC Service Technicians from Information Systems. In particular, users will not download such programs as America Online™, AOL Instant Messenger™, CompuServe™, or ICQ™ to City equipment.
- B. Business Use Only: Users will only access internet information that supports or contributes to the users' work on behalf of the City.
- C. Employee Use Only: Users will not make internet access available to visitors or to other employees who are not authorized to have internet access.
- D. No Objectionable Use: Users will on no account access, download or post graphics, multimedia, or text to web sites that promote or advocate racism, sexism, pornography, violence, hatred of specific groups, such as religious groups, use of illegal substances, civil disobedience or other illegal behavior.
- E. No Breach of Confidentiality: Users will not post messages online or otherwise transmit text, graphics, or other files across the internet disclosing sensitive or confidential information regarding the City's business or legal affairs.
- F. Chat Rooms: Users will not participate in online chat rooms. However, this does not apply to authorized conferences or discussions of official City business may be carried on via the internet.
- G. Games: Users will not access, or participate in, web sites offering recreational games.
- H. Downloading Programs: Users will not download any executable files or compressed executables files, or programs, for any reason whatsoever, without first receiving approval from Information System. This is necessary to protect PCs from viruses, ensure that non-standard software is not loaded onto PCs, ensure that software copyrights are not violated, and ensure the integrity of each PCs profile.



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- I. Disclaimer: Any textual communications from any user transmitted across the internet will contain the text, "The opinions expressed here do not represent the views of the City of Memphis," unless the user is specifically transacting City business via this medium and is authorized to speak on the City behalf in the matter under consideration.
- J. Misrepresentation: Users will not misrepresent themselves in any way, either as to individual identity or in their capacity or authority as City employees, in any communication transmitted across the internet.
- K. Logs: Logs of internet access by any user may be initiated and maintained by the City, with or without the user's knowledge or permission, at any time, and any information gathered from such logs may be used to deal with violations of this policy.

VI. INTERNAL E-MAIL

Internal e-mail consists of messages generated, transmitted, received, and stored via software installed for this purpose on City computers, and transmitted only between City users. Such messages are generated and transmitted through Novell Group Wise™, Microsoft Exchange™, or similar software, across the City's internal computer network. specific provisions of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy applying to internal e-mail use are as follows.

- A. Business Use Only: Users will employ internal e-mail to generate and transmit only messages dealing with City business and the employee's workplace. Some latitude is permitted, e.g., to transmit messages information users of departmental lunches or celebrations to honor employees who are leaving or announcements of deaths and births in the families of employees, but e-mail may not be used simply to generate and transmit individual messages for purely social purposes.
- B. Employee Use Only: Users will not make internal e-mail available to visitors, either to transmit messages or to review in-boxes or out-



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boxes. Users will generate and transmit messages only on their own internal e-mail accounts and will not transmit from another user's e-mail account or otherwise misrepresent themselves as being another user.

- C. No Objectionable Use: Users will on no account generate or transmit harmful, objectionable, or inappropriate messages via internal e-mail. Such messages would include, but not be limited to, false, profane, abusive, defamatory, racist, sexist, or threatening messages, directed at or reflecting on any group or individual; messages advocating violence, use of illegal substances, civil disobedience, or any other illegal behavior; messages promoting the views or efforts of any political organization, office-holder, or candidate for office; messages advocating the doctrine or beliefs of any religious sect or organization; or sexually oriented messages, requests for sexual favors, or unwelcome requests for socializing. Such messages would also include unsubstantiated rumors about the internet and e-mail, e.g., unverified rumors that a virus is about to make all computers crash. Such warnings are appropriately transmitted only by Information Systems, following adequate verification.

Moreover, users will not generate or transmit messages promoting individual user businesses, or solicitations for funds for the user. However, appropriate messages may be transmitted informing interested employees of catastrophic circumstances in the life of another employee, with an invitation to donate funds at the recipient's discretion.

Should a user receive a message like the ones described above, he or she should immediately report the message to his or her supervisor, for appropriate action. Once the message has been shown to the supervisor and copied or printed as necessary, it should be deleted from the user's e-mail in-box. On no account should the user discuss or share the message with other employees, in any form.

- D. Broadcast messages: No message may be transmitted to the entire group of City users unless the sender has been specifically authorized to transmit such messages by the appropriate City authority, as described in the Policy on Electronic Communication in the City



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Personnel Manual. In addition, sending messages to user-defined group lists should be done only if there is a specific business need to do so. Otherwise, e-mail messages should be transmitted only to individuals.

- E. Authority: Users should transmit official or authoritative policy statements only if authorized to do so. If a message reflects only the user's opinion, it should be worded in such a way as to make this clear to any recipient.
- F. Tone and Content: All messages generated and transmitted via internal e-mail should be professional and courteous in tone. Users should proofread all messages before sending, for grammar, spelling, usage, clarity, and coherence, to ensure that all messages reflect well on the user and his or her Division.
- G. Storage: Users should periodically review their e-mail in-boxes and out-boxes to delete older messages that are no longer needed. Users must not use their e-mail account as an "electronic filing cabinet," because this taxes the resources of the City's e-mail server.
- H. Review: Logs of internal e-mail use by any user may be initiated and maintained by the City, with or without the user's knowledge or permission, at any time, and any information gathered from such logs may be used to deal with violations of this policy. In addition, individual e-mail messages may be retrieved from the user's account by the City from the same purpose.

VII. EXTERNAL E-MAIL

External e-mail consists of messages generated, transmitted, received, and stored via software installed for this purpose on City computers, and transmitted only between City users and users who are *not* on the City's internal e-mail network. Such messages are generated and transmitted through Microsoft Outlook Express™ or similar software, via the City's internet mail connection. Specific provisions of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy applying to external e-mail use are as follows:



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- A. Authorized Software: Users will not seek to install any internet e-mail software, e.g., Juno™ e-mail-other than what may be installed by authorized PC Service Technicians from Information Systems.
- B. Business Use Only: Users will use external e-mail to generate and transmit only messages dealing with City business or the employee's professional development as a City employee.
- C. Employee Use Only: Users will generate and transmit messages only on their own external e-mail accounts and will not transmit from another user's e-mail account or otherwise misrepresent themselves as being another user.
- D. Attached Files: Users will not open files attached to external e-mail messages without first consulting with Information Systems, since such files may contain viruses or other harmful programs, with or without the sender's knowledge.

Note: It does not matter whether the user knows the sender. The experience with the highly-publicized "Melissa" virus shows that a virus opened by one user can copy the e-mail addresses of other users in the first user's e-mail address book and resend the virus to others *in the user's name*. Others users may open the file, thinking it has been sent from a friend. In a short time, an entire computer network can be paralyzed. This is exactly what happened to many organizations, from major corporations to smaller user groups within 24-48 hours following the first transmission of Melissa, in March 1999. Networks were rendered inoperable in many organizations, and valuable files were destroyed.

Please note also that this policy *does* allow user to open e-mails. The prohibition is simply against opening *attached files*, without first consulting Information Systems. It is possible to open and read an e-mail, without having to open an *attached file*. Again, this policy is for the safety and security of all users of City computers.

- E. No Objectionable Use: Users will on no account generate or transmit harmful, objectionable, or inappropriate messages via external e-mail. Such messages would include, but not be limited to, false, profane,



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abusive, defamatory, racist, sexist, or threatening messages, directed at or reflecting on any group or individual; messages advocating violence, use of illegal substances, civil disobedience, or any other illegal behavior; messages promoting the views or efforts of any political organization, office-holder, or candidate for office; messages advocating the doctrines or beliefs of any religious sect or organization; messages promoting individual user businesses or solicitation of funds for the user; or sexually oriented messages, requests for sexual favors, or unwelcomed requests for socializing.

- F. No Breach of Confidentiality: Users will not transmit messages via external e-mail disclosing sensitive or confidential information regarding the City's business or legal affairs, except in authorized communications with vendors or other parties with a legitimate interest in such information.

Should a user receive a message like the ones described in this paragraph or in paragraph E, above, he or she should immediately show the message to his or her supervisor, make a copy available to the supervisor if requested, and then delete the message. On no account should the user discuss or share the message with other employees, in any form.

- G. Authority and Disclaimer: Users should transmit messages stating official City positions only if authorized to do so. If a message reflects only the user's opinion, it should be worded in such a way as to make this clear to any recipient. All other external e-mail messages will contain the text, "The opinions expressed here do not represent the views of the City of Memphis."

- H. Tone and Content: All messages generated and transmitted via external e-mail should be professional and courteous in tone. Users should proofread all messages before sending, for grammar, spelling, usage, clarity, and coherence, to ensure that all messages reflect well on the City of Memphis.

VIII. INTREPRETATION



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Interpretation of any legal aspects of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy will be decided by the City Attorney's office. Interpretation of aspects of this policy affecting personnel matters, including discipline and termination, will be decided by the Director or Deputy Director of the Human Resources Division, or their designees. Interpretation of all aspects of this policy related to technical issues of internet, e-mail, and PC usage and functions will be decided by the Information Systems Division.

IX. ENFORCEMENT

The Director or Deputy Director of the Information Systems Division, or their designees, will have the authority to carry out all aspects of the internet, e-mail, and PC policy affecting access to, or use of, PCs, the internet and internal or external e-mail. Information Systems may revoke the access of any user, at any time, for violation of this policy. Information Systems may initiate and maintain, at any time, logs of any user's use of the internet or e-mail, with or without the user's knowledge or permission, to determine compliance with, or violations of, this policy, and may inspect and audit files on the user's PC for the same purpose, including retrieval and inspections of individual user records or files.

REFERENCE CORRESPONDING POLICIES

- PM-38-02, GROUNDS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION
- PM-62-21, ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY