

## **INTERNET/COMPUTER USE POLICY**

**Adopted by the Board of Selectmen – Sept. 8, 2005**

### **GUIDELINES**

The use of Town supplied computer equipment and software requires the appropriate, efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of Town computer hardware and network resources. The use of computer hardware and resources must support the Town's objective and be consistent with the Town's mission. Users must abide by this policy. Employees must also follow any more specific internet/computer directives issued by the department by which the employee is employed. If a user violates any of the policy's provisions, his or her access to the computer network and use of computer equipment may be denied, and, in the case of Town employees, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including dismissal.

Users and their Supervisors and Department Heads are jointly responsible for adhering to the provisions of this directive and monitoring the use of network resources to be consistent with assigned duties and responsibilities.

### **PROCEDURES**

- A. The Town's networks and computers may be used only for lawful business-related purposes, except as specified in Paragraph E., below. Users must abide by all federal, state and local statutes, bylaws, rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, provisions relating to copyright protection. Only town acquired, legally obtained software programs are to be installed and/or used on Town computers and all software will be installed and retained only by the Information Systems division staff. Use of Town computer equipment to run other than Town-acquired and authorized software is prohibited. Town-owned software shall not be copied for personal use.
- B. Computers and related equipment, other than assigned laptops, may not be removed from the workplace, or moved to other locations within Town facilities, unless approved in writing by the Department Head and MIS Director.
- C. The use of Town-provided computer equipment and network resources for an individual's participation in activities that are not work-related (such as charitable, social, political or religious purposes, commercial use of profit, union business, or for outside employment) is prohibited. This includes notices/solicitations for donations. Brief personal use as detailed in Paragraph E., below, is permitted.
- D. All Town electronic information systems, hardware, software, temporary or permanent files and any related systems or devices created or stored on the Town's computers are the property of the Town and subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Law. As disclosure of e-mail messages (or any other data files) is

required under the Public Records Law, (despite the designation of any message as “private” or “confidential”), the Town shall not be liable for this disclosure in any way. These computer systems are provided for official Town business. The information in the computer and the employee’s use of the computer is subject to the Town’s review and control. **Therefore, the Town reserves the right, without notice, to have access to, review and/or monitor any user’s workstation and all the information stored therein, and users should not consider any of the material transmitted via network resources or stored in the Town’s computer systems to be private or confidential.** The Town’s Internet server will provide detailed reports on Internet use for each user, including sites visited, and the duration of each visit. Reports and logs generated will be disbursed at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen or Town Administrator. These logs and reports will be reviewed on a regular basis to determine policy compliance. These reports may be subject to public disclosure.

- E. The use of Town computer equipment for personal purposes including sending and receiving e-mails and access to the Internet, shall be limited to brief, infrequent usage to deal with personal family matters that can only be addressed during the work day. Such personal use shall be conducted in a way to make it clear that the employee is not representing the Town. Such use may be made only during the time an employee is relieved from duty, such as during breaks or lunch period. No personal use of Town computer equipment shall interfere with the efficient provision of work by an employee. **All files and e-mails, even if sent as authorized incidental personal use of the computer, are the property of the Town and users can have no expectation of privacy in or ownership of same. Any and all e-mails, files, work product, etc. may be subject to disclosure as public records.**
- F. Network accounts are to be accessed only by the authorized user of the account and the system administrator. No employee (including system administrators, other information system support staff or an independent contractor) is allowed to access e-mail or other data files except for purposes related to Town business. The confidentiality of passwords and user accounts shall be protected for security purposes. Passwords should never be shared with others. Individual users will be held accountable for the use of their account by others, unless such use occurred through no fault of the user.
- G. Users are prohibited from downloading, viewing or transmitting any inappropriate material on or through any of the Town’s Networks. Inappropriate material includes, but is not limited to, material that: (a) is unlawful or illegal; (b) is pornographic or obscene; (c) is threatening; (d) is abusive; (e) is libelous or defaming; (f) is offensive; (g) encourages or incites conduct that would constitute a criminal offense; (h) violated the Town’s harassment policies; or (i) could potentially lead to civil and/or criminal liability or adverse publicity for the Town, its officers and /or employees.

The Town has the sole discretion to determine whether material is inappropriate. The Town also reserves the right to remove any inappropriate material from its

software/hardware. If you receive an inappropriate e-mail message under these guidelines, you are to contact your Department Head or the Town Administrator.

- H. Users may not attempt to circumvent user authentication or security of any host, network, or account. This includes, but is not limited to, accessing data not intended for the user, logging into a server or account the user is not expressly authorized to access, or probing the security of other networks. Users may not attempt to interfere with service to any user, host, or network. This includes, but is not limited to, “flooding” of networks, deliberate attempts to overload a service, and/or attempts to “crash” a host. Users may not use any kind of program/script/command, or send messages of any kind, designed to interfere with another user’s session, via any means, locally or by the Internet. Users who violate network security may incur criminal and/or civil liability as well as disciplinary action.
- I. It is important to use care when sending e-mail messages from Town-owned equipment and from Town-supplied e-mail addresses. Messages should be polite and professional; be sure your messages don’t appear brusque or curt. Don’t write anything you wouldn’t want repeated to others. The text of any e-mail should be appropriate to be sent as a signed letter on Town letterhead. As noted in paragraph D., above, the confidentiality of electronic mail cannot be assumed. Any communication that needs to remain confidential should not be sent electronically.
- J. Computers and all related equipment are the property of the Town and must be treated with care. If you have a problem with computer equipment assigned to you, report the problem promptly to Information Systems Division staff. Do not attempt to resolve network problems, move computer equipment or fix broken equipment yourself.
- K. All Internet use must go through the Town’s Network. Any exception requires the prior approval in writing of the Town Administrator.
- L. All employees shall acknowledge in writing that they have received and read this directive. Such written acknowledgement shall be retained by the Human Resources Department. Nevertheless, the failure to provide such written acknowledgement shall not in any way limit the Town’s ability to enforce this directive.
- M. Any violation of the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action.