

201-008: EMPLOYEE INTERNET & E-MAIL USE POLICY

1. Walpole's Goals for Technology:

The Town of Walpole's computer networks are connected to the Internet and other online services in order to allow Town government to serve the public more efficiently and effectively. Accordingly, various on-line capabilities are made available to designated Town employees for legitimate, work-related purposes. These capabilities may include the ability to send and receive electronic mail (E-mail), to conduct information searches on the "World Wide Web," to gain access to computers not owned or controlled by the Town, and to copy data to and from remote computer sites.

Use of these capabilities is subject to the same management oversight and supervision as any other employee activity. Such use must conform to all applicable laws and regulations. All official policies and procedures established by the Town Administrator or his/her designees to regulate the behavior and performance of Town employees shall apply to use of these computer capabilities. Failure to comply with the guidelines in this policy may result in termination, suspension, or other limitation of an employee's privileges for access to Internet-related capabilities, and may be the cause for further discipline up to and including discharge.

2. Communications & Information Access:

- a. To provide equitable access for all employees to network resources to practice research and problem-solving skills.
- b. To provide all members of the municipal community with opportunities to communicate and collaborate with the broader local and global communities.

3. Instructional/Curricular Technology Integration:

- a. To have all employees use technology to ethically access and analyze information, think critically, solve real-world, complex problems and expand research skills.
- b. To have all employees use technology to improve their ability to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes, audiences, and situations.

4. Explanation of Networked Resources:

The Town of Walpole has actively pursued making advanced technology and increased access to learning opportunities available to our staff. Our goal in providing this service to employees is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication. While we support and encourage employee access to a wide variety of information resources, we recognize the responsibilities for using the networked resources appropriately, legally and ethically. Networked resources include, but are not limited to, CD-ROM materials, on-line library catalog systems, the Internet, electronic mail, bulletin-board conferencing systems and information stored on the Town's servers, such as data files and applications.

5. The Internet:

The Internet is a vast, global network, linking computers at Libraries, State and Federal Agencies and other sites. This technology allows for communication and access to information on a global scale including but not limited to:

- a. Access to local, state and federal entities, agencies and contributing authorities and consultants.
- b. World Wide Web sites that offer thousands of resources
- c. Access to university library catalogs, the Library of Congress and ERIC.
- d. Information and news from research institutions as well as the opportunity to correspond with researchers and educators.
- e. Discussion groups on a variety of topics.
- f. Electronic mail communication with people all over the world.

6. Disclaimer of Liability:

With access to computers and people all over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of value in the context of the municipal setting. The Town of Walpole has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. The Town of Walpole believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the goals of the Town. The Town of Walpole cannot be held responsible for the accuracy and quality of information obtained on the Internet.

The Town of Walpole disclaims all liability for the content of material that an employee may access on the Internet, for any damage suffered in the course of, or as a result of, the employee Internet use, and for any other consequences of an employee's Internet use.

7. Implementation Guidelines:

All staff will be offered instruction through Information Management on the use of networked resources as part of the program incorporating technology into the work area. An awareness of the philosophy of the Town of Walpole concerning the use of networked resources includes staff recognition that the Internet is one of many resources. Guidelines must be provided for employees.

8. Networked Resources Access is a Privilege:

All uses of Walpole's networked resources must be in support of, and consistent with municipal operations and objectives. Network access through the Town of Walpole is a privilege, not a right. Unacceptable uses of the network will result in the limitation or cancellation of user privileges and possible disciplinary or legal action.

Adherence to the policy is a condition for an employee's privilege of networked resources access. All employee users of the networked resources must read, sign and agree to the terms of the following Acceptable Use Policy. Employees who have not returned the signed form with his/her signature will not be given network access and are prohibited from using networked resources with town owned computers, during compensated or uncompensated hours nor associating with the Town during personal, private non-town use.

9. Listing of Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses:

Appropriate use of technology in the municipal environment is the joint responsibility of administration and staff. Every user is expected to take individual responsibility for appropriate use of the network when selecting, sharing or exploring information and media.

- a. E-mail and other on-line services are the property of the Town of Walpole and must be used for Town of Walpole's business purposes.
- b. E-mail messages are considered public records and are therefore legally discoverable and subject to record retention policies. Employees should not expect that e-mail messages (even those marked "personal") are private or confidential.
- c. The Town Administrator may, for legitimate business reasons, approve the monitoring of e-mail messages. Legitimate business reasons include, but are not limited to, system checks, review of employee productivity when employee productivity is called into question by a supervisor or manager, investigations into claims of possible criminal activity, and investigations into claims of inappropriate use of the Town's Internet or on-line services.
- d. Use of the Town's system constitutes consent to monitoring of e-mail transmissions and other on-line services and is conditioned upon strict adherence to the Policy.
- e. All users are expected to undertake precautions to prevent infection of Town's computers by computer viruses. In particular, executable programs imported from other sites to the Town's computers must not be used unless they have been authorized by Management Information Services Department (MIS) and they have been subjected to virus detection procedures approved by MIS. The MIS Department may, from time to time, impose

- additional restrictions of regulations on the importing of remote files, and such restrictions or regulation shall be considered part of this policy.
- f. Notwithstanding the provisions of prohibited used, political lobbying or other activities that may be deemed to be political in nature shall be permitted to the extent that such activities are a part of the official responsibilities of an employee, provided that such activities relate to political issues rather than to specific political candidates.
- g. Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all their employees using computers have read this policy and understand its applicability to their activities.

Acceptable uses of the Town of Walpole's networked resources include, but are not limited to, information/resource sharing and materials that:

- h. Reflect honesty, and high ethical and moral responsibility.
- i. Show restraint in the consumption of shared resources.
- j. Promote innovation and excellence through research, worldwide resource sharing and communication.
- k. Demonstrate respect for intellectual property and ownership of data.

10. Prohibited Uses:

The following uses of the Town of Walpole networked resources are not permitted:

- a. Accessing, sending or displaying offensive, obscene, sexually explicit, defamatory, or harassing messages or materials work, or from home to work.
- b. The transmission of materials used for commercial promotion, product endorsement, or political lobbying (see above).
- c. Attempts to violate the computer security systems implemented by the Town of Walpole or other institutions, organizations, companies or individuals.
- d. Software piracy, or the downloading and transferring of software for which the user does not have the proper licensing.
- e. Trespassing in another's folders works or files.
- f. Plagiarizing, i.e., taking material created by others and presenting it as one's own.
- g. Sharing your password with anyone or using another person's password.
- h. Damaging computers, systems, or networks.
- i. Tampering with, making changes to, or altering system folders or files.
- j. Uploading or creating computer viruses.
- k. Violating copyright laws and illegal distribution of software.
- l. intentionally wasting limited resources.
- m. Using Town resources for personal, commercial, political or religious purposes.
- n. Sharing written or graphic information that identifies specific employees using e-mail or the Internet.
- o. Revealing any personal addresses, phone numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers or other private information of any individual.

11. Network Etiquette:

Employees are expected to learn and to abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette, as well as the rules of municipal decorum. These include but are not limited to:

- a. Being polite.
- b. Using appropriate language.
- c. Being considerate of other's use of the system.
- d. Adhering to the general rules and standards for professional behavior and communications.

The goal of network etiquette if to encourage the efficient use of a shared resource.

12. Changes in the Guidelines:

The Town of Walpole reserves the right to revise this policy at any time.

13. User Agreement:

As a user of the Town of Walpole Computer network, I have read, understand and agree to comply with the Town of Walpole's Acceptable Use Policy. I agree that inappropriate use or behavior may result in loss of use, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

