

Internet and E-mail Policy

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT: The purpose of the Internet Policy is to implement guidelines for the establishment, administration, maintenance, and use of the City's information network resources, including the City local area network, the Internet, and on-line information services.

2.0 PROCEDURES: Information network resources are made available to City staff to improve communications and information exchange with citizens and others and to provide an information and research resource. While the City encourages the use of information network resources to improve communications, certain restrictions are necessary to avoid improprieties and ensure that established standards are met. To reduce potential liability, inappropriate use, and adverse public perceptions. All components of the City of Johnson City's local and world network are the property of the City and remain subject to City control. Successful operation of the City's network requires that users regard it as a shared resource and conduct themselves responsibly and courteously.

Users are encouraged to remember that anything and everything that is on your computer is PUBLIC RECORD and can be reviewed by anyone that requests to see your files. Employees e-mail correspondence may be Public Record under the Tennessee Public Records Law and may be inspected by the public. (T.C.A. 10-7-512)

2.1 Responsibilities

If you are using the Internet from the City of Johnson City, remember it is primarily a productivity tool. It should enhance your productivity, not detract from it. Specifically, the Internet should not be used:

- a. for personal gain or profit
- b. to represent yourself as someone else
- c. for solicitation of City employees
- d. to provide information about, or lists of City employees
- e. for commercial solicitations of non-City business enterprise
- f. when it interferes with your job or the jobs of other employees
- g. when it interferes with the operation of Internet gateways
- h. to distribute or obtain offensive or inappropriate material
- i. for sending or replying to "chain letters"

You should carefully consider the material you are sending to avoid embarrassing the City of Johnson City. When viewing information and sites on the internet, you should be cautious about viewing, down loading, and printing that

information that could be considered objectionable in the workplace. It would be impossible to cover every example of this material, but some examples would be

Policy: HR-167

Effective: January 17, 2003

Page: 2 of 4

those web sites that contain nudity, sexually explicit material, advocate illegal activity, or that advocate intolerance to others, including jokes. You should consider adhering to the following rule-of-thumb. If the material is something the City would not put in our publications, or post in our buildings' bulletin boards, you probably should not distribute it or obtain it through a City provided internet connection. If you still have questions concerning whether or not the material is offensive or inappropriate, you should discuss it with your Department/Division Head or the IT Department.

2.2 *Electronic Mail*

Electronic mail is a departmental resource and is provided as a business communication tool. Employees with legitimate business purposes may have the need to view electronic mail messages. It is also possible that others may view your messages inadvertently since there is no guarantee of privacy for electronic mail messages. Remember, Internet and Intranet services are for use in business related activities only. Good judgment is required while utilizing the electronic mail system.

2.3 *Guide to E-mail Etiquette*

Know Your Audience - Be aware of the culture and conventions of your e-mail recipients. Communication, and especially e-mail, conventions may vary between groups. Remember, different users have different levels of experience with technology applications like e-mail. Be patient and supportive with new users.

Proofread - Spelling and grammatical mistakes can be just as distracting in an e-mail message as they are in written communications. Take the time to proofread your messages, especially messages that are used to communicate or document City business.

Keep Messages Brief and To the Point - Make your messages "concise", not cryptic. Shorter paragraphs have more impact and are more likely to be read.

Format Messages for Easy Reading - White space enhances the clarity of an e-mail message. A blank line only adds a byte to the message so don't be stingy. Lengthy messages are almost always read in hard copy form and should be prepared accordingly.

Don't Overdistribute E-mail - Every message you send creates work for someone else who must read, consider, and deal with the message.

Respect the Privacy Rights of Others - Don't invade privacy by forwarding or distributing messages without permission; or by reading other people's mail. If

you receive someone else's mail by mistake, inform the appropriate party and see that the mail is returned or forwarded to correct party.

Policy: HR-167
Effective: January 17, 2003
Page: 3 of 4

Identify Yourself - Please identify yourself if you are acting on behalf of an organization or professional association, or if you have relevant background or expertise in a matter. Identify your affiliation, title, background, and expertise in your e-mail message. Include your e-mail address in the message and any attachments to it.

Separate Opinion from Non-Opinion - So that readers do not confuse personal opinion with agency policy or position, use labels and explanatory notes to distinguish opinion from fact. If necessary, include a brief disclaimer.

Respect Copyright and License Agreements - Copyright laws are applicable to e-mail networks. Some software that is available for public retrieval through the Internet requires a valid license from the vendor in order to use it legally. Posting information on networks is similar to publication. Be careful to cite references.

Label Messages that are Meant to be Humorous and Be Careful with Sarcasm - Use established conventions or explanatory notes to alert the recipient that a message is meant to be taken humorously. Facial expressions, voice inflection and other cues that help recipients interpret messages are absent from e-mail. You can't always control when and in what context a message will be read. It might be read at the wrong time or by the wrong party. The reader might not understand your intention.

Avoid Sending E-mail in Anger or as an Emotional Response - Don't be hasty. If a message generates negative feelings, set it aside and reread it later. It is best not to send angry messages over e-mail.

Be Careful What You Say About Yourself and Others - As a general rule, don't commit anything to e-mail that you wouldn't want to become public knowledge. Think twice before posting personal information about yourself or others.

Remember, E-mail Privacy is an Illusion - Assume that your message could be around for a long time. It is easy to copy, store, resurrect, and forward anything you write in e-mail.

Don't Send Abusive, Harassing, or Bigoted Messages - This is inappropriate and counterproductive for obvious reasons and reflects badly on the individual and the entire organization. The City could be held liable for the misdeeds of its users.

Reread Your Mail for Content and Tone Before You Send It - On many systems, once you send a message you are committed to it, and cannot retract it.

2.4 *Downloading Materials from the Internet*

Most information and software that is accessible on the Internet is subject to copyright or other intellectual property right protection. Therefore, nothing

Policy: HR-167

Effective: January 17, 2003

Page: 4 of 4

should be copied or downloaded from the Internet for use within the City unless express permission to do so is stated by the material owner.

Materials distributed over the Internet in the form of “shareware” or “freeware” often come with express requirements or limitations attached (e.g. not to be used for commercial purposes; cannot charge others for use or distribution; subject to a copyright or attribution notice being affixed to each copy; must distribute source code etc.) If there are such terms applied, you must read and understand them before downloading the software. Make a copy of the terms if possible. If you think the City of Johnson City will not be able to comply with any part of the terms, do not download the material. Anytime you are unsure about the meaning of the restrictive language or have questions about it, you should contact a representative of IT at City Hall to review it before downloading or using the material.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY: The Human Resources Director is responsible for the administration and communication of this policy.

APPROVED:

M. Denis Peterson
City Manager

Original:
Revisions: 01/18/2003

CITY OF JOHNSON CITY

Internet – E-Mail Access Release

By signing this release, the undersigned agrees that he/she has read and understands the City's Internet/E-Mail policy and will abide by the policy. Specifically, the undersigned acknowledges that (1) Internet access will be only for official City business, (2) Exchanges that occur in the course of conducting City business on the Internet will be considered a communication of the City and held to the same standards as formal letters, and (3) The City has the ability to monitor the user's Internet activity.

In addition, the undersigned employee agrees to the following:

City of Johnson City employee Internet and Intranet users WILL:

- Take all required precautions against importation of computer viruses. This includes scanning files obtained through the Internet utilizing a virus scan program BEFORE the file is accessed in any way.
- Use common sense at all times.

City of Johnson City employee Internet and Intranet users WILL NOT:

- Operate a business through the City's Internet link.
- Send or receive sexually oriented messages, images or jokes.
- Subscribe to any non-work related list servers.
- Send mail or other communications, files, or programs containing offensive or harassing statements, including comments based on race, national origin, gender sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or political beliefs.
- Take actions that cause interference to the network or to the work of others.

Employee Name

Department Head Approval

Employee Signature

Date