

Town of Concord

APP # 51 **Internet Policy**

USE OF THE INTERNET BY TOWN OF CONCORD STAFF

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of the Internet as an information resource and a tool to assist employees in the performance of their work. In compliance with law and the guidelines provided herein, employees are encouraged to use the Internet to its fullest potential to further the Town's mission, to provide service of the highest quality to the Town's citizens and customers, to discover new ways to use resources to enhance service, and to promote staff development.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

In General:

Employees have an obligation to use their access to the Internet in a responsible and informed way, conforming to network etiquette, customs, and courtesies. Use of the Internet encompasses many different interconnected networks and computer systems. Many of these systems are provided free of charge by universities, public service organizations, and commercial companies. Each system has its own rules and limitations, and guests on these systems have an obligation to learn and abide by the rules.

Employee users should identify themselves properly when using any Internet service. They should also be careful about how they represent themselves, given that what they say or do could be interpreted as Town opinion or policy. Users should be aware that their conduct can reflect on the reputation of the Town and its employees.

As noted below, use of the Internet is a privilege which may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct. Examples of inappropriate conduct include (but are not limited to):

- * use of the Internet for unlawful activities or for any activities which violate Town policy
- * use of abusive or objectionable language in either public or private messages
- * misrepresentation of oneself or the Town
- * sending chain letters, or forwarding non-business messages with inappropriate content or the potential to spread damaging files such as viruses
- * using official dissemination tools to distribute personal information
- * wasting time on unrelated business
- * other activities that could cause congestion and disruption of networks and systems

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES:

- 1: Employees should use the Internet, when appropriate, to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively.

The Internet provides access to a wide variety of information resources that can aid employees in the performance of their jobs. Examples of job-related use of the Internet include: accessing external databases and files to obtain information or conduct research; searching online public access catalogs; corresponding with citizens when appropriate; disseminating documents to individuals or groups; and participating in and reading electronic mail discussion groups on job-related topics.

- 2: Employees may use the Internet for professional activities and career development.

Use of the Internet facilitates pursuit of professional and career development goals. Examples of professional use include: communicating with fellow members of a professional organization; collaborating on articles and other writing; connecting to resources that provide information relating to education opportunities; and participating in and reading electronic mail discussion groups on professional development topics.

Supervisors shall determine the appropriateness of using the Internet for professional activities and career development during working hours, and to ensure that employees do not use equipment and facilities for private gain.

- 3: Supervisors are encouraged, to a reasonable extent, to identify job-related Internet training needs and resources, to support staff attendance at training sessions, and to permit use of official time for maintaining skills.

While there is a cost for permitting employees to attend classes, in the long term such training will provide benefits -- employees will be better informed about valuable Internet resources and how to use them. Supervisors should determine the appropriateness of attending hands-on training courses, keeping in mind the job requirements and the department-related development needs of employees.

- 4: At the discretion of their supervisors, employees may use official time to attend meetings and programs related to the Internet.

Programs and workshops help to increase awareness of the valuable resources available over the Internet. These programs supplement the knowledge that can be gained through formal training courses, serve as an avenue for continuing education and career development, and provide a forum for employees to meet others with similar problems and needs in order to share information and solutions.

- 5: Employees have an obligation to learn about network etiquette, customs, and courtesies. Accepted procedures and guidelines must be followed when using e-mail communications, participating in electronic discussion groups, using remote computer services, transferring files from other computers, or disseminating information to others over the Internet. Employees also have an obligation to be aware of computer security and privacy concerns and to guard against computer viruses.

Any training program developed for the Internet should include discussion of responsible network use.

- 6: **Use of the Internet by employees is a privilege, not a right, which may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct.** All employees are responsible for complying with the guidelines and standards of conduct contained in this APP, as in other APPs addressing employee behavior and the use of Town property.

Employees shall respect intellectual property rights at all times when obtaining information over the Internet. **The Town has the right to routinely track and monitor its employees' Internet activities, and monitoring will occur at the exclusive discretion of the Town, with or without notice.**

Employees who discover a violation of this policy by another employee are obligated to report it to their supervisor or to the Assistant Town Manager. Questions regarding this policy may also be directed to the Assistant Town Manager.

Violations of the provisions of this policy may result in a revocation of Internet access privileges and other applicable disciplinary action up to and including termination.

DISTRIBUTION: All Employees