

DISCLAIMER

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SAMPLE COMPUTER USE POLICY: policy restricting personal use of employer's computer

COMPUTER USE POLICY

SECTION ONE.

PURPOSE

A. To remain competitive, better serve our customers and provide our employees with the best tools to do their jobs, _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]* makes available to our workforce access to one or more forms of electronic media and services, including computers, e-mail, telephones, voicemail, fax machines, external electronic bulletin boards, wire services, online services, intranet, Internet and the World Wide Web.

B. _____ *[Name of business or owner of computer system]* encourages the use of these media and associated services because they can make communication more efficient and effective and because they are valuable sources of information about vendors, customers, technology, and new products and services. However, all employees and everyone connected with the organization should remember that electronic media and services provided by the company are company property and their purpose is to facilitate and support company business. All computer users have the responsibility to use these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

C. To ensure that all employees are responsible, the following guidelines have been established for using e-mail and the Internet. No policy can lay down rules to cover every possible situation. Instead, it is designed to express _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]* philosophy and set forth general principles when using electronic media and services.

SECTION TWO.

PROHIBITED COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic media cannot be used for knowingly transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communication that is:

1. Discriminatory or harassing;

2. Derogatory to any individual or group;
3. Obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
4. Defamatory or threatening;
5. In violation of any license governing the use of software; or
6. Engaged in for any purpose that is illegal or contrary to _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]* policy or business interests.

SECTION THREE.

PERSONAL USE

The computers, electronic media and services provided by _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]* are primarily for business use to assist employees in the performance of their jobs. Limited, occasional, or incidental use of electronic media (sending or receiving) for personal, nonbusiness purposes is understandable and acceptable, and all such use should be done in a manner that does not negatively affect the systems' use for their business purposes. However, employees are expected to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and not abuse this privilege.

SECTION FOUR.

ACCESS TO EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

A. Generally, electronic information created and/or communicated by an employee using e-mail, word processing, utility programs, spreadsheets, voicemail, telephones, Internet and bulletin board system access, and similar electronic media is not reviewed by the company. However, the following conditions should be noted:

_____ *[Name of business or owner of computer system]* does routinely gather logs for most electronic activities or monitor employee communications directly, e.g., telephone numbers dialed, sites accessed, call length, and time at which calls are made, for the following purposes:

1. Cost analysis;
2. Resource allocation;
3. Optimum technical management of information resources; and
4. Detecting patterns of use that indicate employees are violating company policies or engaging in illegal activity.

B. _____ *[Name of business or owner of computer system]* reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any employee's electronic files and messages to the extent necessary to ensure electronic media and services are being used in compliance with the law, this policy and other company policies.

C. Employees should not assume electronic communications are completely private. Accordingly, if they have sensitive information to transmit, they should use other means.

SECTION FIVE.

SOFTWARE

To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the company's computer system, unauthorized downloading of any unauthorized software is strictly prohibited. Only software registered through _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]* may be downloaded. Employees should contact the system administrator if they have any questions.

SECTION SIX.

SECURITY/APPROPRIATE USE

A. Employees must respect the confidentiality of other individuals' electronic communications. Except in cases in which explicit authorization has been granted by company management, employees are prohibited from engaging in, or attempting to engage in:

1. Monitoring or intercepting the files or electronic communications of other employees or third parties;
2. Hacking or obtaining access to systems or accounts they are not authorized to use;
3. Using other people's log-ins or passwords; and
4. Breaching, testing, or monitoring computer or network security measures.

B. No e-mail or other electronic communications can be sent that attempt to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.

C. Electronic media and services should not be used in a manner that is likely to cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of other people to access and use the system.

D. Anyone obtaining electronic access to other companies' or individuals' materials must respect all copyrights and cannot copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyrighted materials except as permitted by the copyright owner.

SECTION SEVEN.

ENCRYPTION

Employees can use encryption software supplied to them by the systems administrator for purposes of safeguarding sensitive or confidential business information. Employees who use encryption on files stored on a company computer must provide their supervisor with a sealed hard copy record (to be retained in a secure location) of all of the passwords and/or encryption keys necessary to access the files.

SECTION EIGHT.

PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE FORUMS

A. Employees should remember that any messages or information sent on company-provided facilities to one or more individuals via an electronic network—for example, Internet mailing lists, bulletin boards, and online services—are statements identifiable and attributable to _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]*.

B. _____ *[Name of business or owner of computer system]* recognizes that participation in some forums might be important to the performance of an employee's job. For instance, an employee might find the answer to a technical problem by consulting members of a news group devoted to the technical area.

SECTION NINE.

VIOLATIONS

Any employee who abuses the privilege of their access to e-mail or the Internet in violation of this policy will be subject to corrective action, including possible termination of employment, legal action, and criminal liability.

SECTION TEN.

EMPLOYEE AGREEMENT ON USE OF E-MAIL AND THE INTERNET

I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the foregoing policies, rules, and conditions governing the use of the Company's computer and telecommunications equipment and services. I understand that I have no expectation of privacy when I use any of the telecommunication equipment or services. I am aware that violations of this guideline on appropriate use of the e-mail and Internet systems may subject me to disciplinary action, including termination from employment, legal action and criminal liability. I further understand that my use of the e-mail and Internet may reflect on the image of _____ *[name of business or owner of computer system]* to our customers, competitors and suppliers and that I have responsibility to maintain a positive representation of the company. Furthermore, I understand that this policy can be amended at any time.

Dated: _____.

[Signature of employee]
[Printed name of employee]
[Employee's computer account]