



Town of Winthrop

ACCESS AND USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to set in place the standards for the proper and allowed uses of the Town's telecommunications systems and equipment, including but not limited to its computers, telephones, handheld devices, electronic mail (e-mail), facsimile machines (faxes), emergency notification systems, radio communication systems and the internet.

The Town of Winthrop provides staff with the ability to send messages and information through e-mail, fax and the internet. The use of these capabilities and equipment is subject to the same management oversight as any other employee activity. The Town's telecommunications systems and equipment, including computer hardware and software are valuable assets; they must be used for Town business only. Employees may not use Town e-mail for personal, non-business related use nor may they access or solicit information for personal, nonbusiness related use.

No Expectation of Privacy/Public Access:

The Massachusetts Public Records Law broadly defines the term "public record" to include all documentary materials or data, regardless of its physical form or characteristics, created or received by any official or employee of any governmental unit. As a result, all photographs, papers and electronic storage media including e-mail of which a governmental employee is the "custodian" constitute "public records." Therefore, use caution as emails, faxes, records of phone calls made and received, and Internet sites visited can be considered public information and can be reviewed not only by the Town, but also any third party who requests the information. All e-mail sent and received as principal addressee at a Town-issued address, or any address when in an official capacity, as well as faxes and internet postings should be considered a public record subject to legal discovery and record retention policies.

From time to time, management may access an employee's computer, email or stored email information files to better serve the Town's needs or to make certain that they are being used properly and in compliance with this policy. Email messages, as well as all computer data, are considered the property of the Town of Winthrop and not the property of any individual. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with respect to information stored on their computers. The use of a password is to control access to the equipment and is not intended to create a right or expectation of privacy. All employees are required to register any computer passwords with the IT Department. All messages sent or received by e-mail or the internet are stored automatically on the Town's computer system and deleting such messages does not guarantee that they cannot be retrieved.

Notwithstanding the Town's right to retrieve and read any e-mail messages, faxes or internet postings generated from or sent to a Town-issued address, employees shall not retrieve or read

any messages that are not sent to them unless express permission is given by the intended recipient.

No employees shall send e-mail under another employee's name nor shall any employee change any portion of a previously sent e-mail message without prior authorization.

Appropriate Use:

E-mail, and related on-line services, are the property of the Town and are to be used for business matters directly related to the operational activities of the Town and as a means to further the Town's objective to provide efficient, complete, accurate, and timely services. The telecommunications systems and equipment shall not be used for personal gain or to conduct personal business, political activity, fundraising activity, or charitable activity unless sponsored by the Town, with the approval of the Town Manager. The transmission of materials used for commercial promotion, product endorsement or political lobbying is strictly prohibited.

No property of the Town, including computers, may be used for any unlawful purpose or to offend, harass, abuse or otherwise communicate offensive, unlawful, or inappropriate messages or messages in violation of the Town's Freedom From Unlawful Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy. Nor may the telecommunications systems and equipment be used to access material unrelated to the performance of Town related business.

No user shall pirate software or download and transfer software for which the use does not have the proper licensing.

All users are expected to undertake precautions to prevent infection of Town computers by computer viruses. Executable programs imported from other sites to Town computers may not be used unless they have been authorized by the IT Department, and have been subjected to virus detection procedures approved by the Town Manager, or his/her designee. Additional restrictions or regulations on the importing of remote files may from time to time be imposed and such restrictions or regulations shall be considered part of this policy.

Users shall not engage in activities that could cause congestion and disruption of networks and systems, including but not limited to consuming excessive system resources, e.g. mail bombing and flooding.

For security purposes, employees should either log off or revert back to a password screen saver when leaving their computer for an extended period of time. When leaving for the day, employees should log off. All electronic media should be kept away from magnets including those found in telephone receivers and paper clip holders.

Viewing or transmitting pornography from Town systems is strictly forbidden.

Installation of computer software and hardware is only to be done by the IT Department staff, or authorized vendor. IT staff can make exceptions on a case-by-case basis, but a request must first be made to the IT Department. Installation of privately owned hardware and software onto Town systems is prohibited.

Employees may not take any computer equipment or software out of the workplace without written permission from the Town Manager. Copying Town-owned software for personal use is a violation of software license agreements and is therefore forbidden.

Many computer files contain sensitive and privacy-protected data. Release of this data, whether deliberate or accidental, to unauthorized persons or agencies, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. The Town will report any unlawful use of its systems to the appropriate legal authority for prosecution.

Any employee who violates this policy or uses the Town's telecommunications systems for improper purposes shall be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.