

# **Computer Procedures, Internet and E-mail Policies**

## **Executive Summary**

Polk County has an applications-driven strategy that allows employees and departments to deliver service, define problems, and participate in technology solutions. The Information Technology Department endeavors to stay current with hardware and software configurations. IT will maintain the professional expertise necessary to sustain current County technology and incorporate service innovations in the business process.

Polk County continues to upgrade and improve computer systems in order to fulfill our mission and better serve Polk County citizens. This acceleration of our technological base, especially personal computers, has expanded and decentralized our employee user base. The power of the individual workstation and ability to communicate externally makes it appropriate for the County to have guidelines for the procurement and utilization of Information Technology resources.

## Polk County

### Computer Procedures - Including E-Mail and Internet Policies

#### I. PURPOSE:

This policy establishes guidelines and standards for the use of County-owned computing equipment, software, data, electronic mail and the Internet. These guidelines and standards must be understood by each End User. Further, revisions to these guidelines and standards may be expected as new products and services are introduced and as the understanding of information processing and Polk County business practice evolves.

#### II. DEFINITIONS:

Hardware	Physical equipment used for processing or data communications
Software	Programs, programming languages, instructions, or routines which are used to perform work on a computer
Data	Information such as records, images, e-mail, or other textual material stored on or accessible through a computer whether that data resides on County computers or is accessible through the Internet or other on-line services through the use of County computers

#### III. COMPUTER PROCEDURES

The first and foremost rule for using these technologies is:

*Don't say, do, write, view, or acquire anything that you wouldn't be proud to have everyone in the world learn about if the electronic records are laid bare.*

##### 1. Inappropriate Conduct

Conduct which violates the County's Computer Usage Policy with respect to computing resources includes:

- A. Copying County-owned or licensed software or data to another computer system for personal or external use;
- B. Attempting to, or modifying County-owned or licensed software without approval from IT;
- C. Attempting to, or accessing Operating System prompts or executing Operating System commands without approval from IT;
- D. Attempting to, or damaging or disrupting operation of computing equipment, data communications equipment, or data communications lines;
- E. Attempting to, or intentionally accessing or modifying data files, databases, directories, or software without proper authorization;
- F. Using County computing resources for purposes other than those intended, including:
  1. Allowing access by unauthorized persons
  2. Using County resources for external purposes or personal gain
  3. Transporting computers, data, data media, programs, documentation and/or equipment to another location unless authorized by IT
- G. Invading the privacy of an individual by using electronic means to ascertain confidential information;
- H. Copying or altering another user's software or data without permission from that user;
- I. Knowingly accepting or using software or data which has been obtained by illegal means;
- J. Abusing or harassing another user through electronic means;
- K. Using the County's computing facilities in the commission of a crime;
- L. Using the County's computing resources to access, transmit, store, display or request obscene, pornographic, erotic, profane, racist, sexist or other offensive material (including messages, video, images or sound);
- M. Connecting or attaching equipment not purchased by Polk County to County-owned workstations and equipment without approval from IT; and
- N. Installing or using software not purchased by Polk County on County-owned workstations and equipment; or knowingly copying or using programs in contravention of copyright laws

## 2. Identification & Passwords

The County's computer systems require that each user have a unique identity, referred to as a —User ID, protected by a —Password, to gain access to devices and the network. This identity and password are used to represent an End User in various system activities, to provide access to certain software and data based on his/her duties and purpose for requiring such access. As such, this computer identity is another instrument of identification and its misuse constitutes forgery or misrepresentation.

Conduct which involves misuse of User ID and Password includes:

- A. Allowing another individual to use the identity and password;
- B. Using another individual's computer identity and password even if the individual has neglected to safeguard his or her computer identity

## 3. Security Concerns

The placement of a computer system in a user area and the portability of the equipment and associated data media creates special user concerns, as outlined below:

- A. IT and the End Users must insure that all equipment is located in a secure area where the opportunities for theft are minimized.
- B. The End User must insure that only authorized personnel have access to the computer system and that only legitimate items of County business are processed thereon.
- C. Local data files must be safeguarded from unauthorized access.

The ability to load a large amount of data on an easily transported media makes it imperative that confidential data be carefully controlled and safeguarded.

## 4. Equipment Care, Maintenance, and Disposal

Users must insure that their computers are not exposed to extremes of heat or cold, dust, smoke, or other potential contaminants. Drinks and food should be kept away from the equipment or storage media.

IT should be advised of any malfunctions arising with the equipment. IT will maintain a repository of computer system components and will supply user areas with available components as needed.

Hardware and software components should be transferred to IT for disposal.

## 5. Reporting Violations

Abuses of County computing resources should be brought to the attention of the appropriate departmental manager or office supervisor. If this is not possible, report such abuses to IT

## 6 Sanctions

Anyone found to have violated any section of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action which could result in termination of system access, termination of employment and/or criminal prosecution, if appropriate. Disciplinary actions shall be determined by the appropriate Department Head/Elected Official in consultation with the Human Resources Department.

## **IV. E-MAIL POLICIES**

Polk County provides electronic mail to employees for business purposes. All electronic messages are the property of the County and therefore are not considered private unless otherwise protected by law.

The County provides access to its electronic mail system to external users, such as consultants, temporary employees, special task force members and others as deemed necessary to conduct Polk

County business. External users will only be given access to the County's electronic mail system if they agree to abide by all applicable rules.

### Prohibited Use of E-Mail

The following uses of the County's Electronic Mail System are prohibited:

- I. To send County-wide mail not related to County business;
- II. To send copies of documents in violation of copyright laws;
- III. To compromise the integrity of the Polk County and its business in any way;
- IV. To advertise personal business;

- V. To send messages containing offensive, abusive, threatening or other language inappropriate for the workplace;
- VI. To send messages that violate the County's Sexual Harassment Policy or any other Polk County Policy; and
- VII. To obtain access to the files or communications of others for no substantial business purpose

#### 1. Monitoring of Electronic Mail and Data

All electronic mail messages and related data are the property of the Polk County. The County reserves the right to access messages and related data whenever there is a legitimate purpose to do so or under the following circumstances:

- A. Upon the discontinuation of County employment for any reason, a user's mail and data may be accessed for the purpose of saving those messages and files that pertain to County business. This access will be granted only upon notification from the Department Head/Elected Official to IT. These files may be subject for transfer to another user if necessary to conduct County business;
- B. If required by law to do so;
- C. In the course of an audit or investigation triggered by indications of impropriety or as necessary to locate substantive information;
- D. When necessary to investigate a possible violation of a County policy or a breach of the security of the electronic mail system; and
- E. In the event there is reasonable suspicion that a user has committed or is committing a crime against the County or for which the County could be held liable

#### 3. Disclosure of Mail Accessed by Monitoring

The contents of electronic mail created and sent for legitimate business purposes, such contents not being protected by the Privacy Act, are subject to Open Records Law and may be disclosed without the permission of the End User.

However, disclosure of the unprotected contents of a message not created or sent for business purposes, such disclosure being without the consent of the employee, shall be limited to investigative employees who have need for access to such information or in the course of an investigation.

Any electronic mail message, except those protected by the Privacy Act, may be disclosed to law enforcement officials, if legally required. The Director of IT will review any such requests and provide the contents of electronic mail without the consent of End User, sender or recipient.

#### 4. Retention of Electronic Mail Messages

Messages that have been moved/stored in the Trash Folder are subject to be automatically deleted after 7 days.

All messages stored in a user's —mailbox folders are retained at the discretion of the End User. We recommend that these messages be periodically purged to conserve storage space. IT recommends that messages retained after 180 days be archived and stored for the End User.

### **V. INTERNET POLICIES**

Polk County provides Internet connectivity for authorized employees in Polk County facilities for business purposes.

Internet connectivity is provided to employees and acknowledged by their Department Head or Elected Official. These End Users will be granted the appropriate access and security setup after the End User Agreement is signed.

IT will initiate and administer controls to the access, security, firewalls and all Internet applications.

#### 1. Responsibilities

End User responsibilities are to:

- A. Secure their network account and passwords. IT will presume that all use of the account and passwords to be by the authorized End User of that account and passwords. End Users must take reasonable precautions to prevent the account and passwords from becoming known to other persons;
- B. Ensure they are the sole user of the assigned network account;
- C. Take reasonable effort to use the Internet resources effectively and economically;
- D. Obey all instructions, written or verbal, given by IT in regard to Internet use;
- E. Advise IT or their supervisor/manager if information to which the End User is not entitled has been inadvertently

- obtained or sent, or they become aware of a breach of security; and
- F. Sign an End User Agreement

2. Unauthorized Use:

End Users are not permitted to use Internet resources to:

- A. Copy, disclose, transfer, examine, rename, change, or delete information or programs belonging to another End User or Polk County without the express permission of that End User or Polk County IT;
- B. Avoid any restrictions or security placed on the use of their Internet account;
- C. Knowingly store, transmit, or receive any material of an obscene, vulgar, slanderous, offensive, harassing, or illegal nature;
- D. Obtain unauthorized access to any computer facility or service;
- E. Send any material over the Internet that identifies the End User and/or portrays Polk County in an unprofessional manner; and
- F. Install software or download files without approval to purchase required licensing from IT

**VI. END USER AGREEMENT**

- 1. Valid signatures are required for permission to use Polk County's Local Area Network, Wide Area Network and/or provided Internet accounts.
- 2. Permission is in effect for the duration of the End User's employment with Polk County or until the Office/Department Supervisor and/or IT rescinds permission.

By signing this agreement, I \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) agree to abide by the terms and conditions outlined in this Computer Usage Policy. I realize that the Computer Usage Policy is provided to improve access to information and enhance productivity throughout Polk County. I agree to use Polk County's equipment and facilities legally, efficiently and in a manner consistent with County purposes and with general standards of decency.

I acknowledge that some material available through the Internet may be offensive, defamatory, graphic, inaccurate, illegal, or otherwise objectionable. However, I agree that Polk County shall not be held liable for any objectionable materials that I might encounter.

By my signature, I agree that I hold sole responsibility for my conduct regarding network, e-mail and Internet accounts. I am also responsible for any materials that I access through the Internet, and for any consequences that I incur as a result of improper network use.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
IT Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office/Department Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Contact: Information Technology  
515-286-3757  
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