

# **USE POLICY FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION RESOURCES**

## **Introduction**

Dane County provides a variety of technological resources to its employees to improve public service and maximize efficiency. The purpose of this policy is to advise users regarding the use of the County's information technology resources and the information that is created, transmitted, received, or stored on these resources. Information technology resources include, but are not limited to, desktop and laptop computers, the local and wide area networks, application software, data, electronic mail, Internet access, printers, fax machines, voice mail, cellular phones and telephones.

All employees who have access to County information technology resources are required to read and comply with the County's policy. Failure to do so may result in 1) revocation of access to information technology resources and/or 2) disciplinary action ranging from a reprimand to immediate discharge.

## **General Use**

Information technology resources are the property of Dane County and should be used for valid County business in an effort to improve public service and efficiency. Use of any of these resources should be treated like use of the telephone. Although occasional and limited personal use is acceptable, particularly in the case of emergencies, employees may **not** use any information technology resources in any way that:

- interferes with an employee's work performance
- denigrates the credibility or reputation of the County
- interferes with County contractual relationships
- disrupts service to the public
- relates to political causes not related to County business, or
- is intended for personal monetary gain

The County reserves the right to monitor Internet use, email, and other information stored on County computing resources to ensure that public resources are not being wasted or misused and to ensure that the County's information systems are operating as efficiently as possible.

Employees should not expect privacy with respect to information stored on County information technology resources. The County has the right and the ability to access all computer files, including email messages, Internet activity, and voice mail files without prior notification. The County may scan messages for the presence of viruses or to maintain system integrity. Supervisors or management also may access an employee's computer files, email messages, Internet activity or voice mail files if there is a suspicion of wrong doing, even if there is no other business related purpose for doing so.

Employees who are terminated, suspended or laid off do not have rights to the contents of their computer files, voice mail messages, or email messages and are not allowed access to the voice mail or email system.

## **Access and Passwords**

Access is granted to individual users to secure information and maintain accountability. Passwords, codes, and user names are the means by which individual access is granted and security is maintained. The use of passwords and codes to gain access to another person's files is prohibited. To preserve security, users should:

- limit computer access to properly authorized individuals
- verify that the individual doing computer maintenance is authorized to do so
- protect passwords and change them every 90 days
- when choosing a password, refrain from using persons, places or things that are closely identified with the user
- refrain from sharing passwords or posting them in public view
- change passwords if they become known to others
- refrain from using another employee's sign-on
- sign off or log off when the PC or terminal is not in use

Unauthorized access will be recorded and investigated. Any suspected misuse should be reported to a supervisor.

## **Software**

A standard suite of software is provided on all County computers to facilitate efficient support and compliance with copyright laws and license agreements. Only licensed and approved Dane County software will be supported. The installation and use of personal software, including screen savers, on County computers is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Division of Information Management.

## **Data**

Data requires proper management to permit effective decision-making and to conduct business in a timely and effective manner. Electronically stored data and information, including email, is a corporate asset. Dane County employees should strive to protect the integrity, accuracy, and confidentiality of data, as well as protect data from unauthorized access, use or destruction. The Division of Information Management suggests the following data practices:

- Refrain from accessing and using data and information in unauthorized ways.
- Handle confidential, copyrighted and licensed data and information appropriately.
- Develop and maintain data according to established county standards.
- Follow procedures for dissemination of data.
- Store data on the network whenever possible, and back up PCs not connected to the network.
- Inform supervised staff of county data policies and proper data practices.

## **Hardware**

Computing hardware is very expensive and should be maintained and preserved. The Division of Information Management suggests the following measures to preserve your computing hardware:

- Whenever possible, secure rooms in which computer equipment is located.
- In public or other highly accessible areas, computing resources should be secured to deter and prevent theft.
- A separate electrical outlet should be used for each computer.
- Locate computer hardware away from windows.
- Food and drink should be consumed and stored away from computer hardware.
- Keep computer hardware free of dust and dirt.
- Use anti-static sprays, carpets, and mouse pads to minimize static electricity.
- Floppy disks should be protected by avoiding contact with magnetic fields and keeping them in a secure container.
- Users should avoid bumping the computer and monitor.
- Sign-ons will be locked out after three unsuccessful entry attempts.

- Individual external or internal PC modems are a security risk, and are prohibited unless authorized by Information Management. External access dial-in or dial-out is performed using a dial-in or dial-out server.

**Electronic Mail (Email)**

Email is intended to facilitate effective communication. Email correspondence and communication should reflect appropriate workplace conduct and enhance employee performance. Messages stored on the County’s computer network are the property of the County and may be accessed by authorized personnel to monitor workplace efficiency and productivity.

Employees do not have a right to privacy with respect to email messages. The Division of Information Management and department heads or their designee may access your email for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- to find lost messages
- to assist employees at their request or consent in the performance of job duties
- to study the effectiveness of the email system
- to comply with investigation into suspected criminal acts or violations of this policy
- to recover from system failures or other emergencies
- to ensure that Dane County computing resources are being used for County business

Email messages should not be used for personal gain, partisan political messages, the harassment of others, or any illegal activity. Users should also avoid sending and receiving email that could be construed as scandalous, defamatory, libelous, sexually explicit, obscene, or in violation of intellectual property rights such as copyrights and trademarks. Users may not send email messages with the sender’s identity forged or send email anonymously.

All email should be viewed as being written under a County letterhead. Employees should refrain from discussing topics or conveying opinions that they would not put in written form or share with a wider audience. Keep in mind that public records laws generally apply to electronic transmissions in the same manner as they would to paper transmissions.

**Email Storage and Retention**

As part of the Dane County’s on-going commitment to ensure full compliance with the state’s public records law, the County implemented a new email archival system on 06/28/2006. All email activity in your county email account from this date forward is being be archived.

Items archived:

- Inbox (email from both Internet and internally)
- Deleted Items
- Drafts
- Sent Items
- Any Personal Folders

Items not archived:

- Calendar
- Contacts
- Journal
- Notes
- Tasks

Since this includes ALL messages, please notify your friends and family that any email they send you will be archived and kept for seven (7) years.

Please be aware that all information will be archived, which may include that which is sensitive in nature, such as health data, juvenile information, information regarding on-going investigations, etc. if you send or receive email regarding these matters. Deleting messages and "emptying the trash" will not keep these messages from being archived.

The County will retain and maintain, in a searchable form, a copy of all emails for at least seven (7) years. Each communication may be subject to open records analysis and release (if appropriate), if a request is made which encompasses the communication.

## **Internet**

Internet access is provided to County employees to use as a resource to perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently. It is important to remember that use of the Internet can be monitored by authorized personnel. Employees represent Dane County and should conduct themselves appropriately. Employees should ask the question, "Does my use of the Internet enable me to perform my duties more effectively and less expensively, or does it provide better service to the taxpayers?" If the answer is no, then the employee's Internet usage is either unnecessary or inappropriate.

The Internet is a powerful communication and research tool, and employees are encouraged to use it to:

- disseminate information to the public
- improve communications with the public
- maintain currency on professional standards, regulations, and training
- conduct research and analysis for work related projects

The Internet should **not** be used to:

- access web sites that are not work related
- access a web site or location on the Internet where a fee is charged without the explicit consent of an employee's supervisor
- access or distribute sexually explicit, pornographic or other indecent or obscene material
- interfere or disrupt other County network users, services, or equipment
- obtain copies of, or modify files that are private, confidential, or not open to public inspection
- violate copyright and trademark laws and regulation

## **Web Page Maintenance**

The accuracy and currency of information is critical to the utility of the Dane County Web page because users expect this information to be the most current and reliable information available. Departments should make every effort to maintain the most accurate and reliable information available on the Internet. The Division of Information Management will provide advice and support to County departments to maintain their Internet information.

## **Telephone**

Employees are provided access to telephones to ease communication with one another. As with the other forms of information technology resources, occasional and limited personal use is acceptable, particularly in the case of emergencies, but it should not, in any way, affect work performance or service to the public.

- Employees should not use County telephones to for personal monetary gain.
- Employees should never make personal long distance phone calls that are charged to the County.

**Cellular Phones**

Cellular phones are provided to employees whose job functions require mobility and accessibility. Cellular phones should not be used for personal calls.

- Employees are responsible for any charges that accrue from personal cellular phone use.
- Cellular phones should not be used if a conventional phone is readily available.
- Department heads and Information Management are entitled to access telephone records at any time.

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RESOURCES***

Misuse of information technology is a violation of Dane County work rules.

**I have read the above rules and guidelines.**

Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employees are asked to sign this statement and separate it from the Information Technology Policy.

Supervisors will collect the signed statements and forward them to the Employee Relations Division where they will be placed in the respective personnel files.

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