

Town of Stoughton

Computer and Internet Usage Policy

I. Purpose and Goal

The purpose of this policy is to set forth policies and guidelines for: access to the Town of Stoughton's (Town) computer system; and acceptable, safe use of the Internet and related services. The Town's computer and other electronic systems, including but not limited to electronic mail (e-mail), and the Internet, are intended to provide an efficient and effective means of internal and external communications, and to improve work productivity and work products. This policy is intended to guide Town employees, volunteers, and contractors in the performance of their duties.

This policy serves as notice to the employees, volunteers, and contractors of the Town that all data, including any that is stored or printed as a document, is subject to audit and review. There is no expectation of personal privacy in the use of the Internet and e-mail systems when using equipment or services provided by the Town.

This policy serves to delineate acceptable uses of the Internet and e-mail systems by Town employees, volunteers, and contractors (collectively referred to as "users") while using equipment, facilities, Internet addresses, domain names, and/or e-mail services registered to or provided by the Town (collectively known as the system). It also seeks to ensure that the use of Internet and e-mail systems by Town users while using equipment, facilities or systems provided by the Town is consistent with Town policies, all applicable laws, and the individual user's job responsibilities.

II. Policy Statement

The Town promotes Internet and e-mail use that enables users to perform duties related to the Town's mission and encourages users to develop Internet and e-mail skills and knowledge. It is expected that employees will use the Internet and e-mail to improve their job knowledge; to access scientific, technical, and other information on topics that have relevance to the Town; and to communicate with their peers in other government agencies, academia, and industry on matters of relevance to their work for the Town.

This policy applies to:

- all technical resources provided by the Town that are used on or accessed from Town premises, or that are used for Town business;
- all activities using any Town accounts, subscriptions, or other technical services, regardless of the point of access;
- all full or part-time employees of the Town and all volunteers or contractors who use the Town system.

III. Statement of Limited Business Purpose

The Town is providing users with access to the Town's computer system, which includes Internet and e-mail access. The purpose of the system is not to provide users with general access to the Internet and e-mail. The Town system has a limited business purpose, which includes: improving job related knowledge; accessing scientific, technical, and other information on topics that have relevance to the Town; and communicating with peers in other government agencies, academia, and industry on matters of relevance to work for the Town. Users are expected to use Internet and e-mail access through the Town system for purposes consistent with the mission of the Town and Town policies. Uses that might be acceptable on a user's personal account or on another system may not be acceptable on this limited purpose computer system.

IV. Declaration of Privilege: Use of System

The use of the Town system and access to use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The Town has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the use of equipment, resources and material users access or post through the system. Users are also expected to follow the rules set forth in the Town's rules and regulations governing conduct, disciplinary code, and the law in their use of the Town's equipment and networks. This access has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. All access and rights are privileges granted by the Town, and users should expect no privacy rights. Depending on the nature and degree of the violation and the number of previous violations, unacceptable use of the Town system, the Internet, or e-mail may result in one or more of the following consequences: suspension or cancellation of use of access privileges; payments for damages and repairs; discipline under other appropriate Town policies or collective bargaining agreements, including termination of employment; or civil or criminal liability under other applicable laws.

V. Unacceptable Uses

A. The following uses of the Town system and Internet resources or accounts are considered unacceptable:

- Users will not use the Town system to access, review, upload, download, store, print, post, or distribute pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit material.
- Users will not use the Town system to transmit or receive obscene, abusive, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually explicit language.
- Users will not use the Town system to access, review, upload, download, store, print, post, or distribute materials that use language or images that are inappropriate to the workplace setting or disruptive to the work process and will not post information or materials that could cause damage or danger of disruption.
- Users will not use the Town system to access, review, upload, download, store, print, post, or distribute materials that use language or images that advocate violence or discrimination toward other people (hate literature) or that may constitute harassment or discrimination.

- Users will not use the Town system to knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or to harass another person, or to engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- Users will not use the Town system to engage in any illegal act or violate any local, state or federal statute or law.
- Users will not use the Town system to vandalize, damage or disable the property of another person or organization, will not make deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt equipment, software or system performance by spreading computer viruses or by any other means, will not tamper with, modify or change the Town system software, hardware or wiring or take any action to violate the Town system's security, and will not use the Town system in such a way as to disrupt the use of the system by other users.
- Users will not use the Town system to gain unauthorized access to information resources or to access another person's materials, information or files without the implied or direct permission of that person.
- Users will not use the Town system to post private information about another person or to post personal contact information about themselves or other persons including, but not limited to, addresses, telephone numbers, work addresses, identification numbers, account numbers, access codes or passwords, and will not repost a message that was sent to the user privately without permission of the person who sent the message.
- Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Town system or any other system through the Town system, attempt to log in through another person's account, or use computer accounts, access codes or network identification other than those assigned to the user.
- Users will not use the Town system to violate copyright laws, or usage licensing agreements, or otherwise to use another person's property without the person's prior approval or proper citation, including the downloading or exchanging of pirated software or copying software to or from any Town computer, and will not plagiarize works they find on the Internet.
- Users will not use the Town system for the conduct of a business, for unauthorized commercial purposes or for financial gain unrelated to the mission of the Town. Users will not use the Town system to offer or provide goods or services or for product advertisement. Users will not use the Town system to purchase goods or services for personal use without authorization from the appropriate Town official. Users will not use the Town system for political purposes.
- Users will not install, update, or modify software or hardware on any component of the Town system without the express written consent of the IT Director.

B. If a user inadvertently accesses unacceptable materials or an unacceptable Internet site, the user shall immediately disclose the inadvertent access to an appropriate Town official. This disclosure may serve as a defense against an allegation that the user has intentionally violated this policy.

VI. Declaration of Limited Expectation of Privacy

By authorizing use of the Town system, the Town does not relinquish control over any of the components of the system, materials stored in the system, or contained in files in the system. Users should expect only limited privacy in the contents of personal files on the Town system. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the Town system may lead to a discovery that a user has violated this policy, another Town policy, or the law.

An individual investigation or search will be conducted if Town authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or Town policy.

Town employees should be aware that data and other materials in files maintained on the Town system may be subject to review, disclosure or discovery under local, state, or federal law. The Town will cooperate fully with local, state and federal authorities in any investigation concerning or related to any illegal activities and activities not in compliance with Town policies conducted through the Town system.

In the event there is an allegation that a user has violated the Town Computer and Internet Use Policy, the user will be provided with a written notice of the alleged violation and will be provided with notice and opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the Town's policies. Disciplinary actions may be taken.

User violations of the Town Computer and Internet Use Policy will be handled in accordance with law, Town Policy or collective bargaining agreement(s), as applicable.

VII. Internet Use Agreement

The proper use of the Internet, and the workplace value to be gained from proper Internet use, is the responsibility of users of the Town system. The Internet/Acceptable Use Agreement form must be read and signed by the user. The form must then be filed at the appropriate town office.

VIII. System Security Obligations

- Users are responsible for the use of their individual access account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no conditions should a user provide his/her password to another person.
- Attempts to log on to the Town's private network or any other network as a system administrator is prohibited without the express written consent of the IT Director.
- Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of violating this or any other Computer and Internet Use Policy may be denied access to the Town's private network.

- Users will avoid the inadvertent spread of computer viruses by following the Town virus protection procedures and will not disable or otherwise tamper with Town anti-virus software.
- Users should immediately notify a system administrator of any possible security problem.
- Users will promptly disclose to their supervisor any message received that is inappropriate.

IX. Notice of Content Filtering

In recognition of the need to establish a safe and appropriate computing environment, the Town will use content filtering technology to prevent access, to the degree possible, to objectionable or unsuitable content that might otherwise be accessible via the Internet. Filtering technology is not foolproof and the use of filtering technology does not relieve users of their responsibilities under this policy.

X. Limitation of Town Liability

Use of the Town system is at the user's own risk. The system is provided on an "as is, as available" basis. The Town will not be responsible for any damage users may suffer, including, but not limited to, loss, damage or unavailability of data stored on Town diskettes, tapes, hard drives or servers, or for delays or changes in or interruptions of service or mis-deliveries or non-deliveries of information or materials, regardless of the cause. The Town is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of any advice or information obtained through or stored on the Town system. The Town will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through unauthorized use of the Town system or the Internet.

XI. User Notification

- A. All users shall be notified of the Town policies relating to Computer and Internet use.
- B. This notification shall include the following:
 1. Notification that Computer and Internet use is subject to compliance with Town policies.
 2. Disclaimers limiting the Town's liability relative to:
 - a. Information stored on Town diskettes, hard drives or servers.
 - b. Information retrieved through Town computers, networks or online resources.
 - c. Personal property used to access Town computers, networks or online resources.
 - d. Unauthorized financial obligations resulting from use of Town resources/accounts to access the Internet.
 3. A description of the privacy rights and limitations of Town sponsored/managed Internet accounts.

4. Notification that, even though the Town may use technical means to limit Internet access, these limits do not provide a foolproof means for enforcing the provisions of this acceptable use policy.
5. Notification that goods and services can be purchased over the Internet that could potentially result in unwanted financial obligations and that any financial obligation incurred by a user through the Internet is the sole responsibility of the user.
6. Notification that should the user violate the Town's Computer and Internet Use Policy, the user's access privileges may be revoked, disciplinary action may be taken and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.
7. Notification that all provisions of the acceptable use policy are subordinate to local, state and federal laws.

XII. Administration

1. The IT Director has the responsibility and authority for the development, publication, implementation and ongoing administration and enforcement of the processes and techniques required to protect the Town of Stoughton's computer systems from unauthorized access, loss or misuse.
2. Department managers have the responsibility to establish a system to ensure adequate supervision of users using the system and to maintain executed user agreements for system users. They are also responsible for interpreting and enforcing this policy at the local level.
3. Local management has the responsibility to interpret and enforce this policy for employees including maintaining executed user agreements.

XIII. Implementation; Policy Review

The Town administration may develop appropriate guidelines and procedures necessary to implement this policy for submission to the Board of Selectmen for approval. Upon approval by the Board of Selectmen, such guidelines and procedures shall be an addendum to this policy.

The administration shall revise the user notifications, if necessary, to reflect the adoption of these guidelines and procedures. The Town's Internet policies and procedures are available for review by all users and members of the community. Because of the rapid changes in the development of the Internet, the IT Director shall conduct an annual review of this policy.

XIV. Discipline

Any violation of this policy is unethical and may constitute a violation of law. Should any violation be committed the system administrator may suspend or revoke access privileges. In addition, the Town may take disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action.

Adopted by vote of the Town of Stoughton Board of Selectmen on _____, _____

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Town of Stoughton's Computer and Internet Usage Policy.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Date of Hire: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____