



# City of Stevenson Personnel Policy

## Appendix # A-9

### CITY OF STEVENSON INTERNET/INTRANET, PERSONAL COMPUTER, VOICE MAIL AND E-MAIL USE POLICY

#### Section 1 - Purpose

This policy shall govern access to and use of City of Stevenson equipment, telecommunications, and services for employees of the City. The intent of this policy is to provide employees the tools to perform their job tasks without infringing on the rights of others, whether they are public or employee users of the personal computers, computer network, voice mail and Internet/Intranet communications systems. This includes minimizing the risk of computer virus infections, avoiding bandwidth congestion, adhering to software license agreements, and controlling private use of government equipment. This policy addresses issues such as acceptable conduct and usage procedures by public employees when using equipment provided by the employer or provider of such services.

Network and Internet access is provided to city employees as a research and communication tool to assist in conducting City business. Employees are trusted to use good judgment in use of City owned equipment, services (both duration and frequency of use), information technology or other resources.

#### Section 2 - Affected Parties

All City employees including appointed and elected officials, quasi-employees and authorized volunteers who use City equipment, services, and information technology must comply with this policy. All users are expected to use equipment and services in a professional manner.

#### Section 3 - References

The intent of this policy is to address the following Federal and State regulations as they relate to the use of telecommunication equipment and services:

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- The Electronics Communications Privacy Act (ECPA)
- RCW 9.73.030 Privacy Act
- RCW 40.14 Retention, Storage and Destruction of Public Records.
- RCW 42.17 Open Public Records Act
- RCW 42.30 Open Meetings Act

#### Section 4 – Definitions

Terms used for the purposes of this policy --

- 4.1 Discoverable:  
Knowledge that something such as a letter, memo, note or Email or voice mail, may exist and can be requested to be produced as part of an investigation.
- 4.2 Downloading.  
Copying software programs and/or files from a floppy disk, CD ROM disk, or an INTERNET site or from another outside source, on to a City owned computer.
- 4.3 Email:  
Refer to all Electronic Mail software applications, whether INTERNET, LAN or WAN.
- 4.4 Employee:  
Employee means an elected official, officer, employee, quasi-employee, authorized volunteer of the City, who has been elected or appointed, but does not include an independent contractor.



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- 4.5 INTERNET.  
Refers to connectivity with other agencies, networks and/or services.
- 4.6 Official City Business Purposes:  
Those activities performed by an official, employee, or quasi-employee or authorized volunteer of the City, as directed by the City through his/her supervisor in order to accomplish City programs or as required by the duties of his/her position or office.
- 4.7 Posted:  
Refers to World Wide Web (WWW) sites, Email, Voice Mail, news groups or any other network location where information is shared internally or externally.
- 4.8. Public Records:  
Those documents defined in RCW 42.17.020, including the exemptions listed in RCW 42.17.310 and 42.17.315.
- 4.9 Voice Mail:  
Recorded telephone messaging system.
- 4.10 WWW.  
Refers to World Wide Web sites.

## Section 5 - Policies

### 5.1 City Business Purposes

Use of City computers, network resources (whether LAN, WAN, Internet or Electronic Mail) and voice mail systems, shall be used for City business purposes only, as is the case with all forms of City equipment and resources, except as provided below.

#### 5.1.1 Personal Use of City Computer Equipment

Personal use of City computer equipment may be allowed under the following conditions:

The use is small scale and only done during the employees break time or before or after normal business hours of the employee's department or as an alternate means of contact with family members for scheduling changes and other needs typically allowed under the telephone policy.

The employee has made a detailed and specific request and received prior approval through their supervisor and Department Head/Elected Official for the specific use.

The use will have no impact on other departments, employees, or the public and will not cause network congestion and/or misuse of system resources.

All provisions of this policy regarding inappropriate message content (Section 5.3.4 & 5.4.4), solicitations (Section 5.5), advertising (Section 5.6), campaigning (Section 5.7), public records, and other applicable policies will govern the personal use of City equipment by an employee. Employee shall abide by all policies of appropriate behavior and usage discussed in this policy.

Expenses that would be charged to any member of the public which are incurred due to the use, will be paid to the City. These may include:

Photocopy Machines - same rate charged to the public.

Computers - Reimburse the City for any supplies used (i.e. diskettes, paper for printing) at the rate the department would charge to the public.

Facsimiles Machine - Reimburse for pages sent at same rate charged to public. Employees MAY NOT use FAX machines to send messages to a long distance telephone number unless the call is



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charged to the employee's telephone credit card. Reimburse for pages received to cover cost of supplies.

## 5.2 Computer Viruses

When there is a clear business reason for downloading software and/or files from outside sources, the appropriate anti-virus detection program(s) will be used to prevent infection. Use of the Internet risks exposure to viruses that can cause serious problems if downloaded from the Internet.

## 5.3 Electronic Mail (Email)

### 5.3.1 Disclosure

Electronic Mail (Email is NOT private and may be subject to the Public Disclosure Act, RCW 42.17).

All Email messages, (whether created or received) may be considered "public records" pursuant to the Public Disclosure Act, "if they relate to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function." Subject to certain exceptions, the public has a right to examine most "public records." If Email is used, the user is responsible to comply with the Public Disclosure Act.

Email shall not be used to send confidential information. Email is not an appropriate form of communication with legal counsel when seeking legal advice or transmitting information concerning matters in litigation or disputes which are likely to result in litigation. Inadvertent disclosure or dissemination of the communication could waive the attorney-client privilege.

5.3.2 Requests for Copies of Electronic Mail (Email) Information Request for Email messages, calendars, or records will be treated like any other "public record" in the possession of the City. Email contents may be subject to subpoena in legal matters. The department and/or user cannot destroy or erase "public records" except as allowed in RCW Chapter 40.14. Deleting Email messages from a computer does not guarantee it has been erased from the system. Employees should use good judgment when creating Email and always assume that it is discoverable. The City reserves the right to retrieve and/or review Email messages to monitor or prevent misuse of the system, to measure employee responsiveness, or during the investigations of improper or illegal activities.

### 5.3.3 Retention of Electronic Mail (Email)

Each user is responsible to maintain "public records" as required by law. Messages that may be needed beyond 30 days or that are considered "public records", shall be copied or moved to another storage location. Email messages that contain information that could be considered "public records" under RCW Chapter 42.17, must be printed and included in the subject file, or be retained as word processing documents, by the employee controlling the message.

### 5.3.4 Inappropriate Electronic Mail (Email) Message Content

City network users will refrain from the posting of any materials, which violate federal or State laws and/or City Personnel Policies and/or resolutions. All issues raised in the city's Personnel Policy are applicable. These shall include, but are not limited to, those that constitute; discrimination, sexual, racial, religious harassment, slander and/or defamation towards any individual, corporation, agency or organization and disparagement of any trade or product. City employees shall refrain from any posting or transmittal of materials containing obscene, pornographic or profane materials of any kind, including jokes, cartoons, photographs or any other text based or digitized images. Generally, the same policies of appropriate behavior apply in network usage, as apply in the workplace.

## 5.4 Voice Mail (If Applicable)

### 5.4.1 Disclosure

Voice Mail messages are NOT private. All voice mail messages, (whether created or received) may be considered to be "public records" pursuant to the Public Disclosure Act, RCW 42.17, "if they relate to the



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conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function." Subject to certain exceptions, the public has a right to examine "public records." If Voice Mail is used, the user is responsible to comply with the Public Disclosure Act.

Voice mail shall not be used to send confidential information. Voice mail is not an appropriate form of communication with legal counsel when seeking legal advice or transmitting information concerning matters in litigation or disputes which are likely to result in litigation. Inadvertent disclosure or dissemination of the communication could waive the attorney-client privilege.

## 5.4.2 Requests for Copies of Voice Mail Information

Request for voice mail messages or records will be treated like any other "public record" in the possession of the City. Voice mail contents may be subject to subpoena in legal matters. The department and/or user cannot destroy or erase "public records" except as allowed in RCW Chapter 40.14. Deleting voice mail messages from the telephone system does not guarantee it has been erased. Employees should use good judgment when creating voice mail messages and always assume that it is discoverable. The City reserves the right to retrieve and/or review voice mail messages to monitor or prevent misuse of the system, to measure employee responsiveness, or during the investigations of improper or illegal activities.

## 5.4.3 Retention of Voice Mail Messages

Each user is responsible to maintain "public records" as required by law. Any messages that may be needed shall be copied or moved to another storage location. Voice mail messages that contain information that could be considered "public records" under RCW Chapter 42.17, shall be saved to a computer disk and retained as a word processing document.

## 5.4.4 Inappropriate Voice Mail Message Content

City voice mail users will refrain from leaving messages which violate federal or State laws and/or City Personnel Policies and/or resolutions. These shall include but not be limited to those that constitute; discrimination, sexual, racial, religious harassment, slander and/or defamation towards any individual, corporation, agency or organization and disparagement of any trade or product. City employees shall refrain from leaving any message containing obscene, pornographic or profane information of any kind including jokes. Generally, the same policies of appropriate behavior apply in voice mail usage, as apply in the workplace.

## **5.5 Solicitations**

Employees shall refrain from any type of postings, whether on a Web site, to a news group, via Email, or Voice Mail which constitutes a solicitation of any type (i.e. religious, political, personal gain, or in support of illegal activities.)

## **5.6 Advertising**

Employees shall refrain from any type of postings, whether on a Web site, to a news group, via Email or Voice Mail, which may enter the realm of commercial advertising. When government supplies legislative or other public interest information on the Internet, there is little danger of advertising liability arising from the posting.

## **5.7 Campaigning**

Employees must make certain that information provided about elected officials does not cross the line into campaign advertising. LAN, WAN, Internet and telephone system access are established with taxpayer money and there is a risk of violation of laws when elected officials become the centerpiece of information.

## **5.8 Personal Security**



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Employees should keep personal log-ons and passwords confidential and change passwords on a regular basis as needed. Failure to adhere to this policy jeopardizes network security and puts users at risk of potential misuse of the system by other individuals. Network users may be held responsible for all actions taken using their personal network access permissions.

## **5.9 Limitations on Entry into the City Computer Network**

### 5.9.1 Access to Internet and/or Email Services

Access to Internet and/or Email Services will be coordinated through the City Administrator. This includes the use of independent dial-up Internet Service Providers (ISP's) and dial-up Email services.

### 5.9.2 Access to Information on the City's Computer Network

Access to information contained on the City's computer network shall be based on a need to know and a determination from the appropriate department head.

### 5.9.3 Access to Information on Personal Computer Hard Drives

Information stored on the hard drive of a computer may contain discloseable information, it may contain exempt information, it may contain NON-GOVERNMENTAL information, and it may also contain personal information of the person who is assigned the computer for his or her use (similar to the contents of a desk drawer). Therefore, access to or operation of City computers by persons who are not employees, quasi-employees, authorized volunteers or contractors of the City should not be permitted due to the inability to segregate the information.

### 5.9.4 Data Sharing By and Between Employees

In general City employees may have access into such network-stored data in various departments and servers as are relevant to their jobs. If granted, such access should be coupled with an admonition that the material obtained might be exempt from public inspection and caution should be exercised in order to not violate the rights of privacy of private citizens or create a liability for the disclosure of exempt information and a violation of privacy.

### 5.9.5 Access Levels

Levels of access by executive and management employees should be determined by employment status and the need to know.

All users must submit a completed Internet Usage Agreement to their department head who will assign access levels.

## **5.10 World Wide Web**

### 5.10.1 Internet Access

Permission for employees to access the World Wide Web (WWW) resources will be dependent on approval from elected officials or department heads.

#### 5.10.1.1 Internet Access Audit Logs

The Department Head may revoke permission to access specific sites. Access times may be restricted due to bandwidth congestion and/or misuse of system resources.

### 5.10.2 News Groups

When posting to news groups, City employees will use a disclaimer, such as - "these opinions are mine and not necessarily those of the City". Users shall abide by all other policies of appropriate behavior and usage discussed in this policy.

## **5.11 Copyrights, Trademarks, Patents and Authorship**

### 5.11.1 Conservative and Cautious Approach to Copyrights, etc.



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City employees should take a conservative and cautious approach when dealing with materials that may be copyrighted. In general, if an employee is not sure if materials are copyrighted, they should not be used without permission in writing from the author.

The City will comply with Federal software licensing and copyright law.

Copies are to be made with the copyright holder's permission.

Unauthorized copying of software will be cause for disciplinary action. The City will not defend employees for willful misuse of copyrighted software.

Employee owned software must be accompanied by a valid license as evidence of ownership.

### 5.11.2 Trademarks, Patents and Authorship

Trademark violations can occur when governments publish materials online, and knowingly or unknowingly attach to a publication, or omit from the publication, a registered trademark. Employees publishing materials online will respect trademarks and obtain the appropriate authorizations before publishing the materials.

## **5.12 Public Meetings Regulations Open**

RCW 42.30 addresses regulations concerning public and private meetings. Email or voice mail initiated by a Council person and directed to any other Council person, relating to the conduct of City government, is subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. The City should therefore be cautious in the use of Email and voice mail communication in order to not violate these regulations.

## **5.13 Public Disclosure of Electronic Data and Voice Mail, RCW 42.17**

### 5.13.1 Email (electronic communication from one computer to another or to others) and Voice Mail

Each person and department using Email or voice mail should be familiar with the Public Disclosure Act and the definition of "public records."

When information is initiated by a City employee it is NOT SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE if

- (i) it is of a private nature (non-governmental); or
- (ii) it is within the exemptions from public inspection.

Otherwise, it is subject to public inspection at reasonable times, but not by computer operation by other than City employees or contractors. Preferably, disclosure should be provided by printed document; if by diskette or visual examination of screen, care must be exercised to delete exempt data from disclosure.

### 5.13.2 Other Data

The same rules of disclosure apply to Email and voice mail as to written or printed information. The public's right to inspect and copy remains the same. Because of financial restraints and to protect public records from destruction, requesters of public records should not have access to electronic information. Instead, a City representative should print out a hard copy of the requested information. The public should not be permitted to operate City computers for three reasons:

- 1) Data could be inadvertently erased or destroyed;
- 2) Certain excepted or exempt documents, including personal or confidential material, could inadvertently be disclosed; and



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- 3) Limited resources do not allow us to provide the equipment necessary to permit citizens' access to this information.

### Section 6 - Procedures:

#### 6.1 Enforcement of This Policy (Right to Administer or Revoke Use).

Failure of City employees to adhere to this policy may result in restriction or revocation of access and/or disciplinary action. The City Administrator, Mayor or their designee may access data under an employee's control without the consent of the individual employee when necessary for normal business functions or when the Administrator becomes aware of possible inappropriate Internet use.

The Administrator will investigate the site(s) and/or system(s) and call upon the user to determine how the site is business related. If the Administrator concludes that the site is inappropriate the offense will be logged in the individual's file and a memo forwarded to the employee detailing the offense and potential consequences.

##### 6.1.1 Access Limitation or Revocation

With concurrence of the Mayor, City Administrator or Department Head, employees who are found to have violated this Policy may be subject to the following:

- 1) Internet and Email access may be revoked.
- 2) Access times may be restricted.
- 3) Disciplinary action.

##### 6.1.2 Disciplinary Action

Substantial or repeated abuse of the provisions outlined in this policy may be deemed sufficient justification for immediate discharge.

### Section 7 - Responsibilities:

#### 7.1 Compliance with City Policies

All Department Supervisors, Department Heads and Elected Officials are responsible for ensuring compliance with federal laws and regulations, RCW'S, WAC'S, City Ordinances, resolutions and policies. Employees (excluding Elected Officials) may be disciplined in accordance to the City Personnel Policy and/or applicable union contract for failure to follow this Policy.



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## Internet Policy Waiver Form & Authorization to Use

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
have read and understand the City Computer Network, Internet, Intranet, E-mail and Voice Mail Use Policy.

I understand and agree to follow this policy which includes:

Network resources, whether LAN, WAN, Internet, Electronic Mail or Voice Mail systems should be used for official City business purposes only, as is the case with all forms City of equipment and resources. Personal use of the City equipment discussed in this policy is allowed only as described in Section 5. 1. 1.

Electronic Mail (Email) from an internal system and/or the Internet, is NOT private. All Email messages, (whether created or received) may be considered to be public records pursuant to the Public Disclosure Act, RCW Ch. 42.17, and the public has a right to examine most public records.

The City will maintain and monitor Internet access. Permission to access Internet or specific Internet sites may be revoked by a department head and at times internet access may be restricted due to bandwidth congestion and/or misuse of system resources.

I have read and understand this policy and will abide by its provisions.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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