



**ADMINISTRATIVE
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

TITLE: E-MAIL ACCEPTABLE USE			SUBJECT: COMPUTER	
			INDEX NO: 100-31	
EFFECTIVE DATE:	SUPERSEDES:	PAGE NO: OF:	PREPARED BY:	MAYOR'S APPROVAL:
12/01/98		1 3	Diane Supler	

1.0 PURPOSE

To establish basic guidelines for appropriate use of electronic mail (E-Mail).

To ensure appropriate and legal use, promote increased efficiency and reduce costs.

2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

All departments/divisions

3.0 REFERENCES

RCW 42.17, RCW 40.14, Administrative Policy & Procedure 200-04.

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 It is the policy of the City of Auburn to encourage use of the e-mail system as a method of increasing employee productivity and improving the overall capabilities of the City to service its citizens.
- 4.2 The City of Auburn encourages its employees to utilize the e-mail system, whenever practical, except in uses in which a hard copy record is required or is desirable, in lieu of using paper.
- 4.3 Employees will use city provided e-mail services exclusively for City business or otherwise to advance the City's best interests.
- 4.4 All computerized records on PCs, *including e-mail*, are public records subject to public disclosure.
- 4.5 In order to keep the e-mail system operating at optimum capacity, non-business use of the system is not authorized.
- 4.6 Employees are accountable for the responsible use of electronic communications just as they are for other conduct and written and verbal communications in the workplace. Therefore, use of the electronic mail system is restricted as follows:
- 4.6.1 The e-mail system is not to be used to create, send or copy any offensive, harassing or disruptive messages. Messages will be considered offensive if they contain information or language that would violate the City's Workplace Harassment policy. The City will view the appropriateness of any communication on the basis of how it would have been perceived and dealt with had it been conducted by phone, in person or on paper.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE	TITLE: E-Mail Acceptable Use	INDEX NO: 100-31	PAGE NO: OF: 2 3
----------------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

4.6.2 The e-mail system is not to be used to send, receive or download copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without prior written authorization.

4.6.3 Confidential and sensitive information, such as performance reviews, disciplinary and/or corrective actions, attorney-client privileged information, personnel information, and health or medical information, shall not be communicated via e-mail.

4.6.4 Communications that would be inappropriate under other City policies, union contractual agreements are equally unacceptable if delivered via electronic communication. Such inappropriate communications may include, but are not limited to, harassing or discriminatory comments, breaches of confidentiality and insubordinate statements.

4.6.5 The electronic mail system may not be used to solicit or advance commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, unions or other non-job related solicitations.

4.7 The City reserves the right to monitor, access, read, use and disclose e-mail.

4.8 There is no reasonable expectation of privacy when using e-mail for all employees, even if the system uses passwords. Such passwords are for the City's protection and not the privacy of employee e-mail.

4.9 Employees have an obligation to maintain the security of the system by safeguarding their passwords.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.** All e-mail files are regarded as official City business records and not the personal property of employees. All computer records are regarded as not confidential or personal. They are subject to review and disclosure by supervisory or other personnel at any time without prior notification to employees. As such, there should be absolutely no discussion of an employee's personal issues via e-mail. E-Mail is to be used exclusively for appropriate business communication.

5.2 **ELECTRONIC RECORDS.** Records stored or archived to a form that only a computer can process and the electronic transfer of information between staff, typically in the form of electronic notes and memoranda.

5.3 **FRIVOLOUS USE OF SYSTEM.** Frivolous use of the system is defined as that not connected with the daily business of the City, with the exception of specific circumstances listed below:

5.3.1 **CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE NON-BUSINESS USE OF THE SYSTEM IS NOT PERMISSIBLE.** Examples of circumstances where use by City employees of the e-mail system for other than strictly business is not permissible:

- Solicitation of any kind
- "Free to a good home" postings
- "Have you seen my hat" postings

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE	TITLE: E-Mail Acceptable Use	INDEX NO: 100-31	PAGE NO. OF: 3 3
----------------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

5.4 PUBLIC RECORDS. Includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by the City of Auburn regardless of physical form or characteristics.

5.5 RETENTION PERIOD. The length of time a record should be retained. The retention requirements for e-mail and other electronic records are the same as the retention requirements for similar paper records listed on records retention schedules approved by the State Local Records Committee. Questions of retention schedules should be forwarded to the City Clerk's office. The Information Services staff is *not* responsible for ensuring the record is retained.

5.6 APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION. E-mail is to be used for professional business communications. Use of language and subject matter should reflect business purposes. All use of E-mail must comply with the City's practices regarding fair employment and sexual harassment policies.

6.0 PROCEDURE

6.1 The Finance Department shall establish an E-Mail address for each employee.

6.2 To maintain optimum performance of the e-mail system, it is important that housekeeping of mailboxes be performed on a regular basis. Read messages promptly, do not retain large numbers of outdated messages, and delete unneeded read messages daily. Each employee is restricted to a certain amount of space on the network server for e-mail storage. Once that space is exhausted, the system is unable to deliver any new mail messages until space is made available by the user.

6.3 The e-mail system is an important factor in the City's ability to serve its citizens to the best of its ability, and all employees are encouraged to utilize it strictly in an efficient, professional manner.

7.0 E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

As e-mail has become more popular within organizations, such as the City of Auburn, as well as across the Internet, some general rules of conduct have developed that can be considered etiquette or good manners:

- Use forethought in composing e-mail messages -- do not send messages with typos or misspellings
- Use the recipient's correct e-mail address
- Do not send globally (to everyone on the system) messages meant for a particular individual or group
- Be certain to qualify humor with a ":-)" lest it be misinterpreted
- Do not type in ALL CAPS -- it is considered shouting
- Do not indulge in "flaming" -- a term for confrontational e-mail exchange

8.0

A violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.