

Washoe County Internet and Intranet Acceptable Use Policy

Background.

The Internet is an electronic network that connects millions of computers throughout the world, providing communication and resource sharing services. Using the Internet, one can browse to seek relevant information; search databases of facts, books, and articles; access the latest economic statistics and government documents; connect to a computer on the other side of the world as if it were in the next room; transfer software programs, images and other files; or communicate with one or many colleagues wherever they may be located.

The Washoe County Intranet is the internal computer network that offers Internet-like functions, allowing departments to maintain and access information that is not part of a public Internet presence. All references to "Internet" in this policy apply to the Intranet as well, except where the context otherwise requires.

These technologies offer excellent tools for local governments to get work done efficiently, provide public information and communicate with constituents. However, the powerful nature of these tools require that such usage be governed by carefully considered policies, procedures and practices.

While specific technologies or procedures may change, Washoe County's Internet access will be managed according to the guidelines and procedures stated below. Based on unique needs, departments may adopt additional provisions that do not conflict with this policy. If an objection is raised to a department's policy and cannot be resolved by the departmental Internet Coordinator and/or the department head, the Coordinator will refer the matter to the County Manager or his/her designee.

The policy below shall apply to all Washoe County officers and employees, whether full-time, part-time, or temporary and also to all volunteer workers, contractors, or other users who may be given Internet privileges to on County computers.

All data and other electronic messages within the County's system are the property of Washoe County.

Internet Access.

At the discretion of their department heads, employees may have access to a selection of Internet functions at their work sites. Each department head shall determine the classes within the department that may have Internet and/or Intranet access. Access, whether it is obtained through the County network or through

other Internet service providers, shall be managed by departments through customary supervisory channels and facilitated by a designated Internet Coordinator for each participating department. Before using the Internet, an employee shall sign a form (attached) acknowledging that he/she understands the Acceptable Use Policy. The signed acknowledgement forms will be kept on file in the Human Resources Department.

Any Internet usage by an employee on work time or using County equipment shall be done with both knowledge and approval of his/her supervisor. As with any other work, formal permission is required for any overtime or work performed off-site. In allocating staff time and use of computers, job responsibilities shall take priority over the professional uses outlined below.

Officer and employee use of the Internet must comply with this policy.

Training.

Computer and internet use and policy training will be required and conducted on a regular basis to inform employees of the content of the County's Internet and Intranet Acceptable Use Policy. In addition to education and training on the content of the relevant policies, employees will be educated and updated on the capabilities and security concerns which arise from use of the internet.

Employees are strongly encouraged to take advantage of additional relevant training opportunities.

Job-Related and Professional Uses.

To gain maximum benefits from the Internet, officers and employees are encouraged to:

- Use the County's Internet access to accomplish job responsibilities which may include gathering information about work-related problems, communicating with other agencies and vendors on job-related issues, and performing job-related research. Any purchases conducted over the Internet must comply with requirements and procedures developed by the Purchasing Department.
- Share job-related information, discoveries and questions with co-workers.

As professional and skill development of County staff ultimately benefits Washoe County through increased efficiency and effectiveness, with permission of the appropriate appointing authority, employees may:

- Use the Internet to learn its uses, practicing the various functions involved and finding innovative ways to use networked resources to improve the delivery of County services and streamline internal County operations.

- Use the County's Internet access during work hours to gather information to maintain currency in a field of knowledge which pertains to the employee's job description or assigned tasks, to participate in professional associations which pertain to the employee's job description or assigned tasks, and to communicate with colleagues in other organizations on job-related matters.

Personal Uses.

Under NRS 281.481 (7) and Washoe County Code section 5.340 (approved by the Board of County Commissioners on February 9, 1999 and as amended by Ordinance No. 1343 approved by the Board of County Commissioners effective July 22, 2002), personal use of governmental time, property, equipment or other facility is authorized on a limited and restricted basis. Limited personal use (de minimis use) and applicable limitations on such use apply to the use of County computers and Internet access. County code also provides that the personal use of county computers does not create any expectation of privacy in that use by county officers, employees and other users.

County code authorizes “*limited use for personal purposes by county officers and employees of county property, equipment, or other facility if:*

- (a) *The use does not interfere with the performance of public duties including duties of both the officer/employee and other county staff, or interfere with the provision of county services;*
- (b) *The cost or value related to the use is nominal; and*
- (c) *The use does not create the appearance of impropriety.”*

The ordinance also provides that the limited use authorized does not prohibit the use of telephones and electronic mail (e-mail) if there is not a special charge for that use. If there is a special charge for that use, the use is not prohibited, but the officer or employee must reimburse the cost or pay the charge to the county unless the use is made necessary because the officer or employee is attending to county business.

The ordinance further states:

“Except as otherwise provided herein, a county officer or employee shall not use any county time, property, equipment, or other facility to benefit that officer’s or employee’s private business interests. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to: selling products for private business, solicitation related to private business or personal interests, mass mailings, keeping private business accounts, or similar uses. The county may provide access via computer to a bulletin board for use by county officers and employees. If provided, this section does not prohibit a county officer or employee from advertising on the county maintained bulletin board: personal items for sale so long as those items are not connected with a private

business interest of the officer or employee, posting information regarding upcoming social events, or such other uses as may be permitted by the county through rules posted on the bulletin board web page.

With the exception of use of county computers for electronic mail (e-mail), the personal use of county computers ... shall not exceed 30 minutes per workweek which may not occur during the officer's or employee's work time, which time may not be accumulated from week to week.

For purposes of this section, use of computers is use of a county computer, to access Internet web sites, use of a modem from a non-county location to access a county computer, use of county owned software or computer programs, and use of county owned computer hardware to run personal software or programs. Notwithstanding the authorization for limited use of county computers, and personal use of county telephones and electronic mail (e-mail), county officers and employees shall not use county computers, telephones and electronic mail for personal use if the use would violate the provisions of paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of subsection 2 [of § 5.340 as set forth on page 3], or if the use would violate any county or department policies. Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to:

(a) Interdepartmental e-mails to groups of persons regarding non-county community-wide projects or events or non-county social events;

(b) Non-county business uses which violate county policies on sexual harassment, discrimination and harassment, workplace violence, or other county policies.

The county may adopt policies to implement and interpret the provisions of this section and to further prescribe, restrict or limit use of the county's computer system. In addition, county department heads may adopt more restrictive policies on the use of county property, equipment or other facility than as set forth in this section, but department heads may not adopt less restrictive policies. A county department head who adopts a more restrictive policy than as set forth in this section, must file a copy of the policy with the human resources department. ..."

This Internet policy is adopted pursuant to the County code provision cited above. This policy interprets the provisions of County code and provides for further prescribed uses, restrictions and limitations. Employees are responsible for knowing and following the law and policies regarding personal use that apply to them.

As this section of the code allows personal use of county computers for 30 minutes per work-week of non-work time, upon compliance with this provision, it is County policy to allow personal use to occur during an officer's or employee's meal period, but not rest breaks. An employee shall notify his or her supervisor when the employee's personal use occurs during the employee's authorized meal period.

Prohibited uses.

Officers and employees are expressly forbidden to misuse any Internet or Intranet access privileges in ways that may include, but are not limited to:

- Uses that violate existing County policies, including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, discrimination and harassment, workplace violence, or other adopted County policies. This prohibition would include viewing, transmitting, or downloading material that is sexually explicit, that creates a hostile work environment, or that promotes hatred or violence. This prohibition does not apply to County employees carrying out their assigned duties.
- Unlawful activities, including violations of copyright law (17 U.S. Code §101 *et seq.*), or activities that are malicious or have the effect of harassing other users.
- Attempting to gain access to computers or networks to which they do not have legitimate access, or violating the acceptable use policies of any network to which they connect.
- Improperly accessing, reading, copying, misappropriating, altering, misusing, or destroying the information/files of other users.
- Misrepresenting the County's programs or policies in their communications.
- Violating security procedures (e.g., by sharing passwords with others, or by allowing non-employees to have access to "staff-only" functions, resources, or equipment).
- Installing or operating software that compromises computer security or introduces viruses into County systems.
- Using applications requiring excessive bandwidth such as Internet radio, music and video streaming unless such use is essential to the job function of that officer or employee and is specifically approved by that officer's or employee's supervisor.
- Operating a server program (one that provides information to client programs via the World Wide Web, FTP, e-mail, or other Internet functions) without prior

clearance from ***the Technology Services Security Team*** to ensure compliance with network design and security standards.

- Creating a public display of County information on the Internet, such as a departmental World Wide Web page, without prior notification to the Director of Public Relations or their designee to ensure communication about graphic "look and feel," content, and web navigation. Updating files or making minor changes to existing material does not require such clearance.
- *Creating any social networking presence or content creation and distribution that violates the Washoe County Social Media Use Policy.*

Officers and employees should contact their designated Internet Coordinators whenever further guidance on acceptable and unacceptable uses of the Internet is needed.

Violations of Policy.

Individual officers and employees are responsible for their conduct as Internet users, supervisors and managers are responsible for enforcing this policy. Unless required by law, Washoe County shall assume no liability or responsibility for, and shall not defend or indemnify an officer or employee against charges or claims resulting from, any action that is found to be in violation of any part of this policy.

As provided in County code, the County advises officers and employees that no legitimate expectation of privacy can be asserted in their use of the County's computer systems including, but not limited to, their use of the Internet whether the use is part of the officer or employee's personal, limited (de minimis) use or County related use as provided herein. All officers and employees will be required to log-on using their current network login and password after they click on the browser in order to achieve access to the Internet.

Electronic auditing of Internet use: inspection, review and monitoring of Internet use and other employee computer files.

As provided in County code, the County will electronically audit County network and servers connected to the Internet or other publicly accessible networks to support identification, termination, prosecution and disciplinary action for unauthorized activity. Electronic audit mechanisms shall be capable of recording:

- Access to the system, including successful and failed login attempts, and logouts;
- Inbound and outbound file transfers;
- Web sites visited, including uniform resource locator (URL) of pages retrieved;

Date, time, and user associated with each event.

The County will periodically and/or randomly inspect, review and monitor employees' computer files and Internet usage at any time to maintain system security and integrity, or to determine possible violations of policy or law. Periodic and random audit reports of Internet use by employees within their departments will be provided to Department heads.

County management, in consultation with designated Internet Coordinators, supervisors, and the appropriate technical staff, may review alleged violations of this policy on a case-by-case basis. Violation may result in cancellation of an individual's Internet access privileges. In addition, violations may result in appropriate legal action and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Washoe County Internet and Intranet Acceptable Use Policy - Acknowledgment

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Washoe County Internet and Intranet Acceptable Use Policy.

SIGNATURE

NAME

TITLE

DEPARTMENT

DATE