

TOWN OF WATERBORO
INTERNET AND
EMAIL
POLICY

APPROVED BY SELECTMAN 8/21/2012



TOWN OF WATERBORO INTERNET & ELECTRONIC MAIL POLICY

I. Purpose

Electronic mail, Internet and telecommunications access are resources made available to town employees to communicate with each other, other governmental entities, companies and individuals for the benefit of the Town of Waterboro.

II. Policy

The Town of Waterboro's Electronic Mail System (e-mail) is designed to facilitate town business communication among employees and other business associates for messages or memoranda. Since no computer system is completely secure, the e-mail system is not intended to transmit sensitive materials, such as personnel decisions and other similar information, which may be more appropriately communicated, by written memorandum or personal conversation.

The e-mail system is Town property and intended for town business. It must be understood that use of this system is a privilege, which may be limited or removed if the privilege is abused at any time or for any reason, at the sole discretion of the Town of Waterboro. The system is not to be used for employee personal gain or to support or advocate for non-town related business or purposes. All data and other electronic messages within this system are the property of the Town of Waterboro. E-mail messages have been found to be public records and may be subject to the Right to Know laws, depending on their content.

In addition, the Town, through its Selectmen and Town Administrator reserves the right to review the contents of employee's e-mail communication when necessary for Town business purposes. Employees may not intentionally intercept, eavesdrop, record, read, alter or receive other persons' e-mail messages without proper authorization.

The Town of Waterboro owns and administers the necessary software licenses to provide access to e-mail and Internet services. Employees may not rent, copy or loan the software or its documentation. The Town has invested much time and money to secure its electronic systems from intrusion and harmful viruses. Therefore, employees may not provide alternative software to access the system. Employees may be held responsible for any damages caused by using unauthorized software or viruses they introduce into the Town system. Department heads are responsible for the implementation and adherence of this policy within their departments.

1. PURPOSE

Electronic Mail, Internet and/or telecommunication access are resources made available to Town employees, board members, committee members and other volunteers, to communicate with each other, other governmental entities, companies and individuals for the benefit of the Town.

2. POLICY

Email is designed to facilitate town business communication among employees, board members, committee members, volunteers and other business associates for messages or memoranda. Since no computer system is completely secure, the email system is not intended to transmit sensitive materials, such as personnel decisions or other similar information which may be more appropriately communicated by written memorandum or personal conversation.

The email system is Town property and intended for town business. The system is not to be used for personal gain or to support or advocate for non Town related business or purposes. Emails sent or received on the email system form part of the official records of the Town; they are not private property. Email messages may be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Town will provide a web-based email account for committee, board or commission members and employees. Training on use of that account to all appointed committee, board and commissions members to conduct Town related business. It is expected that only the town provided email account will be used for any and all town related business. The use of personal email accounts by employees, committee, board or commission members is strictly prohibited. Any problems with email usage due to lost passwords, technical issues or other problems are to be immediately reported to the Information Technology Manager.

Web-based committee, board or commission members' email accounts afford the convenience of being accessible from any computer with access to the internet. For those committee, board or commission members who do not own a personal computer or that do not wish to access their web-based email account via a personal computer, a computer for their use will be made available at the town hall. Public computers are also available at the Waterboro Public Library. Users should exercise due caution to ensure logging off from web-based email accounts when he/she is finished, particularly when using a public computer.

In addition, the town, through its Town Administrator and/or Department Heads as designated by the Town Administrator, reserves the right to review the contents of employees', board, committee and commission members' email communications when necessary for town business purposes. Employees, board, committee and commission members may not intentionally intercept, eavesdrop, record, read, alter or receive other person's email messages without proper authorization.

The Town of Waterboro purchases, owns and administers the necessary software and licenses to provide access to email and Internet services. Employees may not rent, copy or loan the software or its documentation. The town has invested time and money to secure its electronic systems from intrusion and harmful viruses. IT facilities are provided to assist with day to day work. It is important that the email and internet services are used responsibly, are not abused, and that individuals understand the legal, professional, and ethical obligations that apply to them. All users are expected to act in a manner that will not cause damage to IT facilities or disrupt IT services.

Any accidental damage or disruption must be reported to the IT Manager as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. Users are responsible for any IT activity which is initiated under their username.

3. PROCEDURES

A. General Information on Passwords: While you may have a confidential password, users should be aware that this does not mean that the system is for personal confidential communication, nor does it suggest that email is the property right of the employee. The use of the email system is for town business. Passwords should be extremely strong as determined by the Town Administrator and/or the IT Manager and may be, as required, periodically changed to ensure security of the email system. Users should not share their passwords with anyone other than as his or her department may require. Employee's passwords shall be kept on file with the IT Manager.

B. Internet: The Internet provides the town with significant access and dissemination of information to individuals inside and outside of the town. The use of the Internet system for access and dissemination is intended to serve town business. Like all email messages, Internet messages are capable of being forwarded without the express permission of the original author. Internet messages are also routinely passed through routers before they reach their final destination. A message is "touched" many times before it gets to its recipient and the message author should be aware of this. Therefore, users must use caution in the transmission and dissemination of messages outside of the town and must comply with all state and federal laws.

C. Prohibited Uses: When sending email messages, appropriateness and good judgment should be used. Following are examples of Internet and email uses, which are prohibited:

- Communications that in any way may be construed by others as disruptive, offensive, abusive or threatening;
- Communications of sexually explicit images or messages;
- Communications that contain ethnic slurs, racial epithets or anything that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on race, national origin, sex, age, disability or religious beliefs;
- Solicitation for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations or other non job-related solicitations;
- Access to Internet resources, including web sites and news groups that are inappropriate in a business setting;
- Any other use that may compromise the integrity of the town and its business in any way.
- Ensure they do not disrupt the Town's wider IT systems or cause an increase for significant resource demand in storage, capacity, speed or system performance. Users must avoid any

activity unrelated to Town business, which causes a disruption in the Towns' wide IT systems or causes a significant demand in resources; storage capacity; speed or system performance;

- Ensure they do not harm the Town's reputation, bring it into disrepute, incur liability on the part of the Town, or adversely impact on its image.
- Not seek to gain access to restricted areas of the network or other "hacking activities" is strictly forbidden.
- Must not use email for the creation, retention or distribution of disruptive or offensive messages, images, materials or software that include offensive or abusive comments about ethnicity or nationality, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, appearance, religious beliefs and practices, political beliefs or social background. Employees who receive emails with this content from other employees of the Town should report the matter to Town Administrator.
- Not send email messages that might reasonably be considered by recipients to be bullying, harassing, abusive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory, and libellous or contain illegal or offensive material, or foul language. Not upload, download, use, retain, distribute, or disseminate any images, text, materials, or software which might reasonably be considered indecent, obscene, pornographic, or illegal.
- Not engage in any activity that is likely to
 - Corrupt or destroy other users' data or disrupt the work of other users
 - Waste staff effort or Town's resources, or engage in activities that serve to deny service to other users
 - Be outside of the scope of normal work-related duties – for example, unauthorised selling/advertising of goods and services
 - Affect or have the potential to affect the performance of damage or overload the Town's system, network, and/or external communications in any way
 - Be a breach of copyright or license provision with respect to both programs and data, including intellectual property rights
- Not send chain letters or joke emails from a Town account.

D. Web Site Development: The Internet is an effective channel for the Town to share information with citizens, visitors and customers. Departments are strongly encouraged to work with the Town Administrator (or delegated web designer) to develop and keep an up-to-date departmental page as a link from the Town's home page.

E. Retention: E-mails are subject to record retention requirements.

Generally, e-mail messages are intended to be temporary communications which are non-vital and may be discarded routinely. However, depending on the content of the e-mail message, it may be considered a more formal record and should be retained pursuant to a department's record retention schedules. As such, these e-mail messages are similar to printed communication and should be

written with the same care. Each department head is responsible for establishing and maintaining department retention schedules for the information communicated through the e-mail system.

However, employees should be aware that when they have deleted a message from their workstation mailbox it may not have been deleted from the central e-mail system. The message may be residing in the recipient's mailbox or forwarded to other recipients. Furthermore, the message may be stored on the computer's back-up system for an indefinite period. Note that e-mail has been classified as "public" documents, i.e., available to the media, in at least one state. Keep that in mind when you create or store e-mail.

F. Applicability to employees, part-time employees, contractors and other users: This email policy applies to all employees, board, committee and commission members, contractors, part-time employees, volunteers and other individuals who are provided access to the town's email system. Third parties should only be provided access to the email system as necessary for their business purpose with the town only after authorization from the Town Administrator and only if they abide by all applicable rules.

G. Remote Users: Users may sometimes need to use Company equipment and access the Company network while working remotely, whether from home or while travelling. The standards set out in this document apply whether or not Company equipment and resources are being used.

H. Employee termination, leave of absence, vacation and other: Employees who leave employment with the town have no right to contents of their email messages and are not allowed access to the email system. The Town Administrator may access an employee's email if employees are on leave of absence, vacation, or are transferred from one department to another department and it is necessary for the town's business purposes

I. Penalties: The misuse of the Internet or email privileges by employees, board, committee or commission member will be considered sufficient cause for discipline in accordance with the personnel policies and procedures and/or other applicable rules or laws. In addition, violation of this policy or misuse of the email system may be referred for criminal prosecution and/or restitution of monetary damages.

All new employees, board, committee and commission members will be provided training and a written copy of this policy at the time of hire or appointment and on an annual basis thereafter.

I, _____ acknowledge that I have received training and a written copy of the Town of Waterboro internet and email policy. I understand that a failure to follow the set forth policy may result in discipline, suspension, termination or removal from town board, committee or commissions.

Employee/Board/Committee/Commission Member

date

Town Administrator or Designee

date