

Sample Acceptable Internet and E-mail Use Policy

The following Internet and e-mail rules (policy statement/rules) require strict adherence. Any infraction thereof could result in disciplinary action/s, which may range from verbal warnings to termination; the severity of the misbehavior governs the severity of the disciplinary action.

The rules apply to *all* employees when they are using computers or Internet connections supplied by <Organization Name>, whether or not during work hours, and whether or not from <Organization Name> premises.

- 1. Internet Usage:** Internet use, on company time, is authorized to conduct company business only. Internet use brings the possibility of breaches to the security of confidential company information. Internet use also creates the possibility of contamination to our system via viruses or spyware. Spyware allows unauthorized people, outside the company, potential access to company passwords and other confidential information.
- 2. No Privacy:** Company provides computers and Internet connections ("facilities") to further its business interests. The company has the right, but not the duty, at its sole discretion, to monitor all Internet searches, communications and downloads that pass through its facilities. Any information retained on the company's facilities may be disclosed by the company to outside parties or to law enforcement authorities. You are obligated to co-operate with any investigation regarding the use of your computer equipment and which your supervising officer has authorized.

The Company reserves the right to inspect an employee's computer system for violations of this policy.

- 3. Username and Password:** Personal use of Internet for personal gain is strictly prohibited. Authorization for Internet access must be obtained through your immediate supervisor with the approval of the supervising authority. Once authorization is approved you shall be responsible for the security of your account password. The employee will be held responsible for all use or misuse of his/her account. The employee must maintain secure passwords and never use any account assigned to another user.
- 4. Organizational Representation:** Employees using company's accounts are acting as representatives of the organization. As such, employees should act accordingly so as to not to damage the reputation of the organization.
- 5. Internet Downloads:** Files which are downloaded from the Internet must be authorized and checked for copy-rights, and necessary permissions should be obtained. They should also be scanned for virus contaminations prior to their use. All appropriate precautions should be taken to detect any virus and, if necessary, to prevent its spread.

Removing of such programs from the Company network requires IT staff to invest time and attention that can be better devoted to progress. For this reason, and to assure the use of work time appropriately for work, employee should limit Internet use.

- 6. No Pornography:** Under no circumstances may Company computers or other electronic equipment be used to obtain, view, or reach any pornographic, or otherwise immoral, unethical, or non-business-related Internet sites.

You may not disseminate or knowingly receive harassing, sexually explicit, threatening or illegal information by use of company's facilities, including offensive jokes or cartoons.

Any of above actions of employee can lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

- 7. Maintain Confidentiality:** Employees shall not place, discuss or send any business material or related information (copyrighted software, internal correspondence, etc.) on any publicly accessible Internet computer without prior permission.

The Internet does not guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of information. Sensitive material transferred over the Internet may be at risk of detection by a third-party. Employees must desist transferring such material in any form. Any business information exchanged over the Internet, without prior permission will be treated as a breach of privacy and shall be dealt with severely.

- 8. Hacking is Unauthorized:** Hacking is an unauthorized attempt or entry into any other computer. Never make an unauthorized attempt to enter any computer. Any infringing activity by an employee may attract liability on the organization. Therefore, this organization may choose to hold the employee liable for their actions.

- 9. Importance of E-Mail:** E-mail resembles speech in its speed and lack of formality. Unlike speech, e-mail leaves a record that is often retrievable even after the sender and recipient delete it.

- 10. Email Ownership:** Keep in mind that the Company owns any communication sent via e-mail or stored on any company equipment. Management and other authorized staff have the right to access any material in your email or on your computer at any time. Employee/User shall not consider his/her electronic communication, storage or access to be private if it is created or stored at work. Forwarding of any non-business emails to associates, family or friends shall be viewed as wastage of company time and resources.

- 11. Regular Deletion of E-Mail.** Company strongly discourages storage of large numbers of e-mail messages. As a general rule, after a mail is read, the employee should promptly delete it. If you need to keep a message for longer than a week, save it to your hard disk, or print it out and save the paper copy. The Systems Administrator will regularly purge all messages in employee inboxes and all copies of sent messages that are older than 30 days.

- 12. Be careful when sending replies:** The employee should take extra care when he/she is mailing to a group or an individual. It should be addressed directly to the intended addressee(s). Check carefully, the "To", "CC" and "BCC" before sending mail. It can prevent unintentional errors and embarrassments.

- 13. Provide your Identity:** It is mandatory to include a signature (an identifier that automatically appends to the e-mail message) that contains the method(s) by which others can contact the employee. (Usually e-mail address, phone numbers, fax numbers, etc.).

Representing as someone else, real or fictional, or a message sent anonymously is strictly prohibited.

- 14. Observe Email Etiquettes:** Watch punctuation and spelling. It can reflect on the employee's professionalism. Please use automatic checking programs if available.

DO NOT SEND MESSAGES ALL IN CAPITALS. It looks as if you are shouting. Use initial capitals or some other symbol for emphasis. For example: *That IS what I meant. That *is* what I meant.*

- 15. Judicious use of Auto-Reply feature:** The employee belonging to mailing lists should be careful

when using auto-reply features in e-mail. Auto-reply replies are often sent to the entire list indiscriminately and the reply may not be important to all on the list; e.g. most do not care if an employee is on vacation, and worse, the message may have been intended for only one recipient.

By using the auto-reply feature the employee might give out the Company's domain name and the employee's identity to hackers and spammers, inadvertently.

16. No Spam: Spam/Chain letters are strictly illegal and should not be transmitted through any e-mail.

17. Sexual Harassment and Discrimination: The Company is committed to providing a workplace that is free from sexual harassment, as well as unlawful harassment based on ancestry, race, age, color, marital status, medical condition, mental disability, physical disability, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, national origin, religious creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation. It also prohibits unlawful harassment based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. All such harassment is unlawful.

Any email that discriminate against employee/s by virtue of any protected classification including race, gender, nationality, religion, and so forth, will be dealt with according to the harassment policy.