

Background: Town business these days requires extensive use of information technology devices for communication, document storage, and filing.

The purpose of this policy is to govern the use of the Town’s electronic communications and information systems by municipal users.

Policy

This policy governs the use of the Town’s electronic communications and information systems by municipal users. Users are defined as Town employees, elected officials and appointees. All communication systems, computer equipment, software and information transmitted by or stored in these systems are the property of the Town.

The Town retains control, custody and supervision of all computers and networks owned or leased by the Town. As such, users have no right or expectation of privacy in connection with the use of said equipment and/or networks. The Town also reserves the right to monitor and remove and hardware, software, data, e-mails, social media content, files or settings on computer related systems when deemed appropriate.

Users are not authorized to access messages or information using another person’s password. Unauthorized duplication, dissemination, removal, installation, alteration of files, passwords, programs or other property of the Town is prohibited.

Users are expected to comply with this policy and written directives provided by the Select Board about Town communication and information systems. An employee who intentionally violates any aspect of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including revocation of certain system privileges or termination of employment. This policy will be reviewed as required.

Personal Use

The Town understands an employee may need to use equipment for personal use. The usage must not preempt Town Business and must be done within the bounds of Town policies.

Users are not allowed to use Town equipment or technology for personal business interests, for profit or non-profit ventures, political activities or other uses deemed by the Select Board to be inconsistent with Town business. Questions about whether a use is appropriate should be addressed to the Select Board for a determination.

Software, Hardware, Games and Screensavers

All software and hardware required for employees to perform their job will be provided and installed by the Town. Requests for new or different equipment or software should be made to the Select Board.

Games are considered inappropriate in a business environment and therefore not permitted.

Downloads, software, hardware, or other equipment, which have not been specifically approved by the Select Board may compromise the integrity of the Town's computer system and are prohibited.

Electronic Mail

This section relates to both business and personal e-mail sent from a Town computer. Personal use of the Town's email address is not allowed.

A user's personal e-mail accessed via a Town computer may be considered "public" data and is not protected by privacy laws. Never transmit an e-mail you would not want made public. Users should not expect privacy in any activity conducted on a Town-owned computer.

All emails must comply with Town policies. Notwithstanding the Town's right to retrieve and read any message or information on the e-mail, Intranet or any other Town provided and/or approved system or service, such messages or information should be treated as confidential by other users and accessed only by the intended recipient. Users should not attempt to gain access to another employee's messages or information. Any exception to this requires prior approval, from the Select Board.

Storing and Transferring Documents

Electronic documents, including e-mails, electronic communication and town-related materials should be stored in accordance with the Maine State Records Retention Policy.

Incidental communication, which is not an official record or transaction of Town business, may be deleted by the end of the business day.

Documents or electronic communication classified as protected or private information under data practices requirements will be stored separately from other files.

If there are questions regarding whether an electronic communication or other document is a government record for purposes of records retention laws, or is considered protected or private under data practices, check with the Select Board. For questions about creating an appropriate file structure for saving and storing electronic information, consult the Select Board.

Internet

The following considerations apply to all uses of the Internet whether business related or personal. The Town provides Internet access to users for Town business. Occasional personal use of the Internet is acceptable within the bounds of all Town policies.

There is no quality control on the Internet. All information found on the Internet should be considered suspect until confirmed by another source. Internet use during work hours should be limited to subjects directly related to Town business.

Users may not at any time access inappropriate sites. Some examples of inappropriate sites include but are not limited to adult entertainment, sexually explicit material, or material advocating intolerance of other people, races or religions, or matters that otherwise violate Town policies. This prohibition includes information on social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace, blogs and microblogs such as Twitter. If you are unsure whether a site may include inappropriate information, you should not visit it. No software or files may be downloaded from the Internet unless approved in advance by the Select Board. Users may not participate in any Internet chat-room.

Passwords and Physical Security of Equipment

The Select Board is responsible for assigning and maintaining computer passwords. Passwords should not be shared under any circumstances. If it is necessary to access an employee's computer when he or she is absent, contact the Select Board. If necessary, store the password in a locked file cabinet or a similar secure structure. Lock your workstation whenever you are out of your office.

Employees who have been issued portable computer equipment for Town business are responsible for securely storing and protecting the equipment against theft, loss or damage.