

**Town of Canton**

**CHAPTER 14:**

**POLICY ON EMPLOYEE USE OF E-MAIL , INTERNET, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS**

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**SECTION 14-501. Purposes.**

The purposes of the Town of Canton’s computer and other electronic systems, including, but not limited to, electronic mail ["e-mail"] and the Internet, are to provide an efficient and effective means of internal and external communications, and to improve work productivity and work product. This policy addresses access to and the disclosure of information from such electronic systems.

Among other things, this policy is intended to guide Town of Canton employees, volunteers, and contractors in the performance of their duties.

This policy serves as notice to the employees, volunteers, and contractors of the Town of Canton that all data, including any that is stored or printed as a document, is subject to audit and review. There is no expectation of personal privacy in the use of the Internet and e-mail systems when using computers or services provided by the Town of Canton.

Finally, this policy serves to delineate acceptable uses of the Internet and e-mail systems by Town of Canton employees, volunteers, and contractors [collectively also referred to as "users" or “employees”] while using government-owned/leased equipment, facilities, Internet addresses, domain names, and/or e-mail services registered to or provided by the Town of Canton. It seeks to ensure that the use of the Internet and e-mail systems by Town of Canton employees, volunteers, or contractors while conducting work for the Town of Canton and/or while using Town of Canton provided systems is consistent with the Town of Canton policies, all applicable laws, and the individual user's job responsibilities.

**SECTION 14-502. Statement of Policy.**

The Town of Canton promotes Internet and e-mail use that enables employees, volunteers and, contractors to perform Town of Canton missions and encourages its employees, volunteers, and contractor personnel to develop Internet and e-mail skills and knowledge. It is expected that employees will use the Internet and e-mail to improve their job knowledge; to access scientific, technical, and other information on topics which have relevance to the Town of Canton; and to communicate with their peers in other government agencies, academia and industry on matters of relevance to their work for the Town of Canton.

(a) *Responsible Use:* Users are advised not to use the Internet or e-mail systems for any purpose which would reflect negatively on the Town of Canton or its employees.

(b) *Property of the Town of Canton:* The Town of Canton's electronic mail and Internet systems are business tools. These systems shall be used in a professional manner for legitimate business purposes only and, at all times, remain the property of the Town of Canton .

(c) *Scope:* This policy applies to:

(1) All technical resources that are owned or leased by the Town of Canton that are used on or accessed from Town of Canton premises, or that are used for Town of Canton business. This policy also applies to all activities using any Town of Canton-paid accounts, subscriptions, or other technical services, such as Internet access and e-mail, whether or not the activities are conducted from Town of Canton premises; and

(2) All full or part-time employees of the Town of Canton and volunteers and contractors who are authorized by their supervisors to use Town of Canton resources.

(d) *Information is Not Private:* The Town of Canton computers and the data stored on them are, and remain at all times, the property of the Town of Canton. As such, all messages created, sent, or retrieved over the Internet or the town's electronic mail systems are the property of the Town of Canton, and should not be considered private information. Employees have no right to privacy as to any information or file transmitted through or stored on the Town of Canton's computer systems, electronic mail, or other technical resources.

(e) *Use With Respect for Others:* Access to the Internet via Town of Canton resources and use of Town of Canton provided e-mail must only be for Town of Canton purposes. To that end, the use shall not disrupt or interfere with the work of other network users, adversely affect the operation of the Internet or the Town of Canton's own internal network, or misrepresent the interests of the Town of Canton.

(f) *Monitoring and Disclosure:* The Town of Canton reserves the right to access, retrieve, read and disclose any data, messages or files stored on Town of Canton-funded systems for any purpose. Employees should be aware that, even when a message is erased or a visit to a web site is closed, it is still possible to recreate the message or locate the web site. The Town of Canton reserves the right to monitor use of these systems to prevent abuse, enforce other policies, and access information. Access may occur in, but is not limited to, situations indicating: (1) impropriety, (2) violation of Town of Canton policy, (3) legal requirements, (4) suspected criminal activities, (5) breach of system security, or (6) to locate substantive information or monitor employee performance and conduct. The contents of these systems may be disclosed by Town of Canton Management within or outside of the Town of Canton without employee permission. Furthermore all communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. The Town of Canton has unlimited access to protect the security of these systems or the Town of Canton's property rights.

(g) *Consent:* All Town of Canton employees, who are provided with access to the Town of Canton's e-mail system, Internet, or other electronic systems are required to abide by the Town of Canton's policy contained here and in other relevant documents.

#### **SECTION 14-503. Use of the Internet.**

The Town of Canton provides Internet access to employees for their use in performing their duties for the Town of Canton. All employees of the Town of Canton are responsible for using Internet resources in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. It is the Town of Canton's policy that the Internet resources, like other Town of Canton assets, be used for the benefit of the Town of Canton. All Internet use should be congruent with the Town of Canton's overall government policies. The Town of Canton reserves the right to monitor and/or log all network activity with or without notice, including all web site communications, and therefore, users should have no expectations of privacy in the use of these resources. Use of the system in violation of this or other Town of Canton policies is prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

(a) *Uses that are acceptable and encouraged:*

(1) Communications and information exchanges directly relating to the mission, charter and work tasks of the Town of Canton,

(2) Announcements of Town of Canton procedures, meetings, policies, services, or activities;

(3) Use for advisory, standards, research, analysis, and professional society or development activities related to the user's Town of Canton job-related duties; and

(4) Use in applying for or administering grants or contracts for Town of Canton research programs.

(b) *Uses that are unacceptable:* It is unacceptable for a user to access, use, submit, publish, display, download, save, or transmit on the network, or on any computer system, any information which:

(1) Violates or infringes on the rights of any other person, including the right to privacy;

(2) Contains defamatory, false, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or otherwise biased, discriminatory, or illegal material;

(3) Violates Town of Canton regulations prohibiting sexual harassment;

(4) Restricts or inhibits other users from using the system, or the efficiency of the computer systems,

(5) Encourages the use of controlled substances or uses the system for the purpose of criminal intent; or

(6) Uses the system for any other illegal purpose.

(c) It is also unacceptable for a user to use the facilities and capabilities of the system to:

(1) Conduct any non-approved business;

(2) Solicit the performance of any activity that is prohibited by law;

(3) Transmit material, information or software in violation of any local, state or federal law;

(4) Conduct any political activity;

(5) Conduct any non-Town of Canton-related fund raising or public relations activities;

(6) Engage in any activity for personal gain or personal business transactions, or

(7) Make any unauthorized purchases.

(d) *Copyrighted Material:* Users may download copyrighted material, but its use must be strictly within the agreement as posted by the author or current copyright law. The federal Copyright Act at 17 U. S. C. 101 *et seq.* (1988), protects and prohibits misuse of all original works of authorship in any tangible medium of expression. This includes a prohibition on plagiarism (using someone else's ideas or writing and passing it on as one's own).

(e) *E-Mail:* Internet e-mail is considered network activity, thus, it is subject to all policies regarding acceptable/unacceptable uses of the Internet as well as the Town of Canton's e-mail policy. Users should not consider Internet e-mail to be either private or secure.

(f) *Passwords:* Access to the Internet may require a password and authorized employees are prohibited from giving their password to any other person, except as provided in this policy. The password remains the property of the Town of Canton, and all passwords must be disclosed to the Information Systems Manager.

#### **SECTION 14-504. Uses of E-mail System.**

The Town of Canton provides an e-mail system to employees for their use in performing their duties for the Town of Canton. All employees of the Town of Canton are responsible for using the e-mail system in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. It is the Town of Canton policy that the e-mail system, like other Town of Canton assets, be used for the benefit of the Town of Canton. All e-mail use should be congruent with the Town of Canton's overall government policies. The Town of Canton reserves the right to monitor and/or log all network activity with or without notice, including all web site communications, and therefore, users should have no expectations of privacy in the use of these resources. Use of the system in violation of this or other Town of Canton policies is prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

(a) The Town of Canton's e-mail system is for official Town of Canton business and it shall be unacceptable to use the system for unrelated purposes, including but not limited to, the following:

- (1) To send or receive "chain" or similar type "letters."
- (2) To send or receive documents in violation of copyright or other laws.
- (3) To knowingly open mail not directed to you. Except to the extent that Town of Canton reserves the right to access and review all electronic uses and records, e-mail messages are confidential.
- (4) To send messages in violation of the Town of Canton's security policies.
- (5) To forward electronic messages without a legitimate business purpose under circumstances likely to lead to embarrassment of the sender or to violate the clearly expressed desire of the sender to restrict additional dissemination.
- (6) To send messages that are false or misleading, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, offensive, discriminatory, or illegal, including but not limited to sending messages under an assumed name or with the intent to obscure the origin of the message.
- (7) To solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations or other non-job related solicitations.

(b) Avoid "carbon copying" individuals who have no direct involvement or "need-to-know." Likewise, e-mail to all users should only be used on very rare occasions when every person on the system has a direct need to know.

(c) Avoid "forwarding" e-mail to a third party unless necessary (see "carbon copying"). When forwarding, explain the reason for the forwarding action and edit out any potentially inappropriate contents. If in doubt about the appropriateness of forwarding a given piece of mail, check with the originator for guidance.

(d) When sending an e-mail requiring "action," be sure to indicate which "TO" addressee(s) is/are to take the action.

(e) Do not "say" anything in an e-mail message that could prove embarrassing or compromising to you or others. Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images they transmit.

(f) Avoid potentially contentious exchanges through e-mail.

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

(h) Communications which would be inappropriate under other Town of Canton policies are equally unacceptable if delivered via electronic communication. These communications may include, but are not limited to, harassing or discriminatory comments, breaches of confidentiality, and insubordinate statements.

(i) Use your common sense in determining when to use e-mail, in what is said, and to whom. Remember that no electronic communication is private and the Town of Canton reserves the right to monitor and review all communications originating from or entering its computer systems.

**SECTION 14-505. Security and Virus Protection.**

(a) E-mail and/or Internet access may utilize passwords for security; however employees should be aware that the reliability of such tools for maintaining confidentiality can not be guaranteed. Additionally all passwords must be made known to the Town of Canton, through the Information Systems Manager.

(b) To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the system, employees are not permitted to download any software onto their computer or any drive in that computer or on the network. When downloading a file or opening an e-mail attachment, users must scan all materials with Town of Canton provided virus protection software. Additional consideration of policies established by the Information Systems Manager should be used in determining how to handle potentially damaging e-mails or files.

**SECTION 14-506. Enforcement.**

This policy is intended to be illustrative of the range of acceptable and unacceptable uses of the Internet and e-mail systems provided by the Town of Canton and is not necessarily exhaustive. Questions about specific uses should be directed to the user's supervisor. The supervisor shall consult the Information Systems Manager to determine if any policy violation has occurred.

Immediately upon implementation of this policy, supervisors will be responsible to provide a copy of this policy to, and collect signed consent forms from, all employees who currently have access to the Town of Canton's Internet or e-mail systems.

Prior to authorizing new access, the supervisor is responsible to provide a copy of this policy to, and collect signed consent forms from all employees who will have access to the Town of Canton's Internet or e-mail systems.

The supervisor will review alleged or suspected violations of the policy and clear violations may result in disciplinary actions. Any user violating these provisions or applicable local, state or federal laws is subject to immediate loss or restrictions of Internet/e-mail privileges, additional disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution.

**SECTION 14-507. Consent Agreement.**

As a condition of employment, all Town of Canton employees must acknowledge that all computer and electronic systems, including but not limited to, electronic mail and Internet network activity are the property of the Town of Canton, and therefore, they should not consider any activity to be private. Current users of the Town of Canton's Internet or e-mail systems must sign the consent form provided, within thirty (30) days of receiving a copy of this policy. Prior to obtaining new access to Internet or e-mail systems provided by the Town of Canton, employees must sign the consent form provided. By signing the consent form, users acknowledge that they have received a copy of the policy, read it, and understand the Town of Canton's Policy and the potential penalties for non-compliance.

**Town of Canton Consent Form on Employee Use of E-Mail, Internet, and other Electronic Systems**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Town of Canton's Policy on Employee Use of E-Mail, Internet, and other Electronic Systems and agree to comply with all of its terms and conditions. I understand and agree that all computer and electronic activity, including but not limited to, electronic mail and Internet network activity, being conducted with Town of Canton resources is the property of the Town of Canton.

I acknowledge and consent to the Town of Canton's right to monitor, log, access, and review all such activity, with or without notice. Therefore, I have no expectation of privacy in the use of these resources. I understand that such monitoring may include printing and reading all electronic mail and data entering, leaving or stored on the Town of Canton's equipment.

Finally, I understand that violation of this Policy may subject me to discipline, up to and including, termination of employment by my employer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Name and Title