

**Town of Mashpee  
Board of Selectmen**

**Policy No: 58**

**Information Technology Policies  
Prepared by David DelVecchio, IT Director**

**OVERVIEW**

This document formalizes the policy for all employees, volunteers, and elected and appointed officials regarding the use of Town-owned information technology resources; including computers, printers and other peripherals, programs, data, local/wide area networks, email and the Internet.

Further restrictions may be imposed through policies adopted for Public Safety personnel. This policy is in effect notwithstanding any actions undertaken by the Mashpee Police Department in the course of conducting authorized investigations of criminal acts or allegations, provided these actions are conducted in compliance with applicable laws, Police Department Operational Procedures and supervisory review, to further the successful detection and prosecution of unlawful activities.

**EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of any person using the Town of Mashpee system to read, understand, and follow this policy. In addition, you are expected to exercise reasonable judgment in interpreting this policy and in making decisions about the use of information technology resources.

Department managers are responsible for ensuring employees follow these policies. Any person with questions regarding the application or meaning of this policy should seek clarification from appropriate management.

**UNACCEPTABLE USES**

Unless such use is reasonably related to a user's job and with their manager's approval, it is unacceptable for any person to use Town equipment:

- For any political purposes
- For any commercial purpose
- To send threatening or harassing messages, whether sexual or otherwise
- To access or share sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate materials
- To infringe any intellectual property rights
- To engage in non-business activities

- To gain, or attempt to gain, unauthorized access to any computer or network for any use that causes interference with or disruption of network users and resources, including propagation of computer viruses or other harmful programs
- To intercept communications intended for other persons
- To misrepresent either the Town of Mashpee or a person's role at the Town
- To distribute chain letters
- To play computer games/solitaire
- To access online gambling sites
- To libel or otherwise defame any person or
- To use any unauthorized 3<sup>rd</sup> party utilities to delete information, format any hard drive, or otherwise delete or damage any data on PC's, laptops, servers, etc.

### **DATA CONFIDENTIALITY**

In the course of performing their jobs, Town employees and contractors often have access to confidential or proprietary information, such as personal data about identifiable individuals or commercial information about business organizations. Under no circumstances is it permissible for employees or contractors to acquire access to confidential data unless such access is required by their jobs. Under no circumstances may employees or contractors disseminate any confidential information that they have rightful access to, unless such dissemination is required by their jobs.

### **COPYRIGHT PROTECTION**

Computer programs are valuable intellectual property. Software publishers can be very aggressive in protecting their property rights from infringement. In addition to software, legal protections can also exist for any information published on the Internet, such as the text and graphics on a web site. As such, it is important that you respect the rights of intellectual property.

Copying, storing, displaying, or distributing copyrighted material using Town systems or networks without the express permission of the copyright owner, except as allowed under copyright laws, is prohibited.

### **COMPUTER VIRUSES AND THREATS**

You should exercise reasonable precautions in order to prevent the introduction of threats such as viruses, worms, adware, spyware, phishing, rootkits, scams, Trojans and/or hoaxes into the local area or wide area networks. Virus scanning software should always be used to check any software and/or data downloaded from the Internet or obtained from any source.

## **NETWORK SECURITY**

Most desktop computers in Town are connected to a local area network, which link computers within the Town and outside vendors and resources. As such, it is critically important that you take particular care to avoid compromising the security of the network. Passwords must not be stored in accessible places near the computer. Do not write down your password and store it on the monitor or in your unlocked desk drawer. Most importantly, you should never share your passwords with anyone else, and should promptly notify the IT Director if you suspect your passwords have been compromised. In addition, if you leave your PC unattended for extended periods, you should either log off the network or have a password-protected screen saver in operation. Finally, no user is allowed to access the Internet or other external network via any means unless they have received specific permission from their department manager.

## **EMAIL**

Because email addresses identify the organization that sent the message (name@mashpeeema.gov), you should consider email messages to be the equivalent of letters sent on official Town letterhead. For the same reason, you should ensure that all emails are written in a professional and courteous tone. Finally, although you may regard email as being like a telephone in offering a quick, informal way to communicate, you should remember that email may be stored, copied, printed, or forwarded by recipients. As such, you should not write anything in an email message that you would not feel just as comfortable putting into a memorandum.

## **PRIVACY**

All information systems used by staff are the property of the Town of Mashpee. Use of Town equipment constitutes express consent for the Town to monitor and/or inspect any data or messages that you send or receive, and any web sites you access. The Town retains control regarding the use of each person's computer and all contents stored thereon, and the Town may, at its' discretion, exercise the right to inspect any computer, any data contained in it, and any data sent or received by that computer. You should be aware that the IT department, in order to ensure proper network operations, routinely monitors network traffic.

## **PERSONAL USE OF THE TOWN'S TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

The Town's IT resources are provided for official business only. Employees are allowed reasonable personal use, similar to home use, such as brief messages to family members or to schedule appointments. Other personal business is allowed only during non-working time. Personal business shall be conducted in strict compliance with the other terms of this policy. Employees are reminded that email messages and Internet posting may be considered public records and subject to disclosure.

## **1. Computer Usage Policy**

Town owned data and broadcast systems are provided for use by authorized staff and certain others exclusively for the business of the Town. Personal use of these systems must be limited to infrequent incidental use. Under no circumstance may the Town's systems be used for business purposes of other organizations.

The Town of Mashpee provides you with a complete set of software applications needed to accomplish day to day business. You may not install any personal software or software available via the internet without prior approval. Examples of this include email/web browser add-ons, web active wallpaper, calendars, weather, or other such programs. You may not copy, store, display, distribute or otherwise use such programs without the prior permission of the Town Manager and IT Director.

The rules in simple terms:

- Unauthorized attempts to gain access to any account or information not belonging to you is prohibited.
- No Town system may be used for unethical, illegal, criminal or commercial purposes.
- No Town system may be used for playing computer games.
- Unauthorized instant messaging programs and/or chat room use is prohibited.
- No Town system may be used for unauthorized on-line audio or video streaming.
- No Town system may be used for participating in and/or sending nuisance messages such as chain letters, greeting cards, and obscene or harassing messages.
- No Town system may be used for any peer to peer download of, music, video, data files, or software.
- No Town system may be used through unauthorized access.
- No Town system may be used as a vehicle to gain unauthorized access to other systems.
- Do not use or install any non-governmental software or application that is downloaded from the Internet or anywhere else unless reviewed and approved by the IT department.
- Any user who finds a possible security lapse on any Town system is obliged to report it to their direct Supervisor who should in turn notify the IT Director. Do not attempt to use the system under these conditions until the problem has been investigated.
- All users should be aware that security checks of Town systems can occur at any time.

## **2. Email Usage Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of the Town of Mashpee's email system and make users aware for what Town Hall deems as acceptable and unacceptable use of its email system. The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion.

### **a. Risks**

Email is a business communication tool and you are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same standards apply. Therefore, it is important that users are aware of the risks of email:

- If you forward confidential information, you and the Town of Mashpee can be held liable.
- If you use copyrighted material without permission, you and the Town of Mashpee can be held liable for copyright infringement.
- If you send or forward emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks, you and the Town of Mashpee can be held liable.
- If you send an attachment that contains a virus, you and the Town of Mashpee can be held liable.

By following the guidelines in this policy, you can minimize the legal risks involved in the use of email.

### **b. Legal Requirements**

The following rules are required by law and are to be strictly adhered to:

- It is strictly prohibited to send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks. If you receive an email of this nature, you must promptly notify your supervisor.
- Do not forge or attempt to forge email messages.
- Do not send email messages using another person's email.
- Do not disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending mail.

### **c. Best Practices**

Town Administration considers email an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper email content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image and delivering good customer service. Therefore, the Town wishes users to adhere to the following guidelines:

#### **i. Writing Emails**

- Write well-structured emails and use short, descriptive subjects.

- The use of Internet abbreviations and characters such as emoticons or smileys is discouraged.
- Signatures should include your name, job title, company name, phone number, and website address.
- Use the spell checker before you send out an email.
- Do not send unnecessary attachments. Compress attachments as appropriate before sending them. Attachments larger than 10 MB can exceed the limits of some mail systems.
- Do not write emails in capitals (SHOUTING).
- If you forward mail, state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take.
- Only send emails of which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If they cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider rephrasing the email or using other means of communication.
- Only mark emails as important if they really are important.

ii. Replying to Emails

It is expected that emails be answered within a reasonable amount of time. Users must endeavor to answer priority emails within the same day. Priority emails are emails from citizens and business partners.

iii. Maintenance

Delete any email messages that you do not need to have a copy of, and set your email client to automatically empty your deleted items on closing.

iv. Personal Use

Although the Town's email system is meant for business use, the Town allows the reasonable use of email for personal use if certain guidelines are adhered to:

- Personal emails must adhere to the guidelines in this policy.
- Personal use of email must not interfere with work.
- Personal emails are kept in a separate folder, named 'Private'. The emails in this folder must be deleted regularly.
- Do not forward chain letters and junk mail.
- All messages distributed via the Town's email system, even personal emails, are the Town of Mashpee's property.

v. Confidential Information

Avoid sending confidential information by email. If you do, you must secure the information in a password protected or otherwise secured file. Provide the recipient with the password or key by means of other communication, for instance by telephone.

vi. System Monitoring

You must have no expectation of privacy in anything you create, store, send, or receive on the company's computer system. Your emails can be monitored without prior notification.

vii. Email Accounts

All email accounts maintained on our email systems are the property of the Town of Mashpee. Passwords should not be given to other people. Email accounts not used for 60 days may be deactivated and possibly deleted.

viii. Avoid Open Meeting Law Violations

For those who work with elected or appointed boards, committees or commissions, the utilization of email is a very effective tool to communicate with your members on issues that are within the jurisdiction of that elected or appointed body or matters that may be scheduled before them. However, you must use caution to avoid using email that may unintentionally result in a violation of the Open Meeting Law (M.G.L. Chapter 39, §23A). All matters resulting in a decision of a public body must be done so at a duly posted meeting of that body. Not only must the decision (vote of body) be made at a public meeting, but all such discussion relating to the matter must also be reserved for the meeting. Communication via email by members on issues to be voted on has been determined by the Attorney General's office as a violation of the Open Meeting Law and repeated instances places the Town and that public body at risk of being fined by the Attorney General's office. For more information on how to avoid Open Meeting Law violations as it relates to email communication, please contact the Town Clerk's office.

ix. Public Records Requirement

The Massachusetts Office of the Secretary of State has ruled (with the concurrence of the Attorney General's Office) that certain email correspondence are public documents in accordance with the definition of a "Public Record" as identified in M.G.L. Chapter 4, §7 and Chapter 66, §10.

Whether in electronic or paper format, certain documents, depending on the substance and content of the record, may or may not be deemed a public document. In almost every instance, communication involving a matter pending before a deliberative body is a public document that must be produced upon request.

Consider very carefully what your obligations are under the above noted statutes. Repeated instances of failing to save email correspondences on substantive matters places you at public risk of violating the Public Records Laws of Massachusetts, subjecting you to being fined by the Attorney General's office.

For more information on how to avoid Public Records Law violations as it relates to email communication, please contact the Town Manager's office.

### **3. Internet Usage Policy**

The Town of Mashpee will make every reasonable effort to ensure the Internet is used responsibly and will take every reasonable step to control access to inappropriate material. The Town expects all authorized staff to use the Internet in an appropriate and responsible manner for business purposes only.

No Town system can be used to transmit, receive, submit, publish or otherwise access information deemed inappropriate, including, but not limited to, material that is defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, racially or gender offensive, unethical, sexually oriented, or illegal.

- Staff may not use the Town's Internet account to conduct private, commercial, personal or illegal business. No activity promoting a political or religious point of view will be permitted.
- On-line game playing is prohibited.
- Unauthorized instant messaging programs and/or chat room use is prohibited.
- Internet sessions must be shut down when business is completed. Do not leave an Internet connection open and/or minimized when not in use.
- Hacking (any attempt to gain prohibited access to or malicious attempt to harm or destroy data or to upload, download or otherwise create computer viruses) is prohibited.
- Staff is expected to conform to accepted social behavior in their use of the Internet ("netiquette"). Users are to respect copyrighted material and properly credit all works cited from Internet resources.
- Staff must immediately notify their direct Supervisor who in turn should notify the IT Director if a security problem is discovered.

If there are any questions regarding this policy, please contact the IT department.

***Adopted by the  
Mashpee Board of Selectmen  
November 15, 2010  
To Be Reviewed Annually***



**Information Systems Policies Compliance**

The Town of Mashpee reserves the right to log network use, and to monitor files and file space; thus, users should not expect their use to remain private.

The Town of Mashpee reserves the right to modify these guidelines at any time.

**Declaration**

I have read, understand and acknowledge receipt of the Town of Mashpee Information Technology Policies. I will comply with the guidelines set out in this policy and understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary or legal action.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions**

Questions regarding anything found in this document should be addressed to David DeVecchio, IT Director. This handbook is posted on the Town's website and is reviewed when appropriate.

If you do not have any questions, the Town of Mashpee presumes that you understand and are aware of the rules and guidelines of the Information Technology Policies and will adhere to them.