

Electronic Communications Policy

I. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

- A. Purpose:** City of Minneapolis Electronic Communications Policy and accompanying procedures are adopted to increase awareness of the risks associated with using electronic communications and to communicate the City's requirements regarding the use of electronic communications.
- B. Coverage:** The following policy covers the City's electronic communications system including City e-mail as well as access to City computers and network resources for the purposes of Web browsing and electronic file sharing.

All other City policies and State and Federal laws apply to electronic communications, even if not specifically mentioned in this policy. For example, users shall bear in mind the requirements of City policies, including Civil Service Rule 11, which covers substandard performance and misconduct.

- C. Applies To:** This policy applies to all City employees, elected officials, contractors, consultants, volunteers, agents or any other persons who have gained or are given access to the City's computer system (hereafter referred to as "users").

II. Definitions

Computing Systems: Any computer workstation, server, mobile computing device or peripheral equipment through which files, data or communications may be introduced into the City's enterprise network.

Downloading: Transmission of a file through the Internet or a wide area network from one computer (usually a file server or Web server) to another (usually a desktop workstation). By definition, downloaded files can be documents, images, sounds, Web pages, E-mail messages, programs and other executables, or system components.

Electronic Communications System: Any City e-mail or computer network resource that facilitates the sharing of information.

Executable File: An executable file contains a program. This is a file that is capable of being executed or run as a program in the computer. In a Windows operating system, an executable file usually has a file name extension of .bat, .com, or .exe.

Not Public Data: Government data, which is classified by statute, federal law, or statutory temporary classification as Confidential, Private, Nonpublic, or Protected Nonpublic.

Record of value: A message sent via e-mail is considered a record of value if it is required for ongoing legal, fiscal, administrative, operational or research purposes. These messages, like any other record, are to be assigned to a record series based on the function and content of the message. The user is responsible for determining the nature and content of the e-mail and to assign the proper record series.

Records Series

A group of related records or documents that are normally used and filed as a unit because they result from the same activity or function or have some relationship arising from their creation, receipt, and that permit evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes.

Trade Secret: A form of Non Public Data Trade Secret information is government data, including a formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique, or process that is the subject of reasonable efforts to maintain City secrecy and that derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being readily known to or ascertainable by others. Trade secrets include, but are not limited to, patented or copyrighted computer programs.

Transitory record: A message that does not meet the criteria to be classified as a record of value is considered a transitory record. Transitory records are generally documents of short-term interest that have no documentary or evidential value. The sender or receiver is not required to save or convert a transitory record. Almost all e-mail falls into this category and may be deleted immediately.

III. General Conditions

The electronic communications system is a City-owned tool to be used primarily for matters directly related to the business activities of the City of Minneapolis and as a means to further the City's mission by providing services that are efficient, accurate, timely and complete.

- A. Violations:** Access to electronic communications systems is a privilege and not a right. Anyone who uses these systems in a manner that is not consistent with City policies may be subject to disconnection from the City network and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and termination.
- B. Public Nature of Electronic Communication:** Electronic communication is a public record like any other public document. Users must understand that any communications created, received or backed up on the City systems may be construed to be public documents and thus may be subject to legal requests for public disclosure. This includes communications that users might think of, incorrectly, as personal and private.
- C. Inspection and Monitoring:** City supervisors have the authority to inspect the contents of any equipment, files or mail in the normal course of supervisory responsibilities. Reasons for review include, but are not limited to: investigation of network slowdown; system hardware or software problems

including software license compliance; general system failure; litigation or potential litigation; suspicion of a crime or violation of policy.

Internet usage by individuals may be inspected by the City's information technology department as directed by Human Resources, including external links and services being accessed by users. The City does not systematically inspect all records and relies on users to report offensive or inappropriate material to their immediate supervisor, Human Resources, or another appropriate individual.

By using the City's electronic communications system, all users consent that the City may, at its discretion, inspect, use or disclose any electronic communications or data without further notice for any legitimate business, legal or disciplinary purpose and may disclose or disseminate such messages to appropriate third parties.

Before accessing the City network, all users shall respond to a log on prompt agreeing to allow the City access to all the electronic communications of the user.

D. Acceptable and Unacceptable Use:

1. Ethical Conduct: Users shall maintain the highest professional ethics and conduct while using the City's electronic communications system.

- a. Users shall not intentionally transmit, access or store material that is offensive, harassing, threatening or disruptive. Among material which may be considered offensive are messages that contain sexual implications, racial slurs, or any other comment that offensively addresses someone's age, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, affectional preference, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin or mental or physical disability.
- b. Users shall not transmit or intentionally access material that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religious or political beliefs, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, affectional preference or sexual orientation.
- c. Users shall not transmit or intentionally access material that contains any kind of sexually explicit remarks or other content that may be a violation of the [City's Respect in the Workplace Policy](#) (pdf). Such violation may include sexually explicit remarks, material, or attachments. In addition, sexually explicit material that is disallowed under the City's [Respect in the Workplace](#) policy shall not be archived, stored, distributed, edited or recorded using the City's resources, unless done so for the purpose of an investigation or litigation or for legitimate personnel reasons.

2. Representing the City: A City e-mail account identifies the user to others as a City employee and, therefore, users shall conduct themselves in a professional manner that is consistent with City goals. Users shall be aware of their potential audience when sending electronic communications, just as when they are using any other City communication tools. This includes not representing personal opinions in such a way as to confuse potential readers regarding City policies.

- a. City employees may participate in external bulletin boards if participation in the board supports the employee's normal business functions. Employees may not participate in non-work-related boards where they are identified as City employees by their e-mail address or other designator.

3. Information Security: Users shall respect the privacy and integrity of information used, shared or stored on the City's electronic communications system.

- a. Users shall not illegally disclose any data protected under the Minnesota Data Practices Act or any other applicable state or federal law. Users are responsible for knowing the legal status of such data that they have access to and work with.
- b. Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files or data belonging to other users, except in the normal, authorized conduct of their work.

4. Network Security: Users shall respect the integrity and security of the electronic communications system. Users are responsible for knowing and understanding the content of any information published on the City's Intranet by the City's information technology department describing procedures, guidelines and best practices for ensuring network security.

- a. Users are responsible for protecting City passwords against unauthorized use. Users shall not share City passwords. Users cannot be required to provide their City password to other staff under any circumstances.
- b. Users shall not seek to purposefully bypass security protections on the City's electronic communications or other computing systems, nor aid or assist others in doing so. Users shall immediately report any suspected breach to the City's information technology department. (link to procedure)
- c. Users shall not knowingly download, develop or use electronic files or software programs that introduce viruses or other disruptive or destructive software into City computing systems.
- d. Users shall not engage in mass distribution of messages (to all City users or departments), except as authorized by the City's communications department.

- e. Users shall not use the Electronic Communications System to conduct the following activities including, but not limited to gambling, wagering, betting, instant messaging, chatting, blogging, selling, bidding, or on-line trading unless related to official City assignments.

5. Personal Use: Users shall restrict personal use to occasional activities that do not interfere with the ability to conduct City business. In addition, the following apply:

- a. Users shall not use the Electronic Communications System for religious or political purposes including soliciting for charity or support for outside organizations unless sponsored by the City.
- b. Users shall not use the Electronic Communications System to advertise products or services or conduct any activity meant to foster personal gain, financial or otherwise, including outside business or commercial activities.

E. Copyrighted Information: Users shall not use the Electronic Communications System to copy or transmit any documents, images, software or other information protected by a copyright owned by someone other than the City of Minneapolis, without proper authorization from the copyright owner.

1. Copyright protection applies to any document, image, software or information unless it is specifically marked as public, not copyrighted, or freeware. In the absence of any specific copyright markings, material or information should be assumed to be copyright protected.

2. It is the user's responsibility to obtain proper authorization from the copyright owner prior to using the electronic communications system to copy or transmit copyrighted material and the City assumes no responsibility for a user's failure to obtain the proper authorization.

IV. E-mail

A. City E-mail Account: Users shall use a City e-mail account and e-mail address derived from the City's official domain name (@minneapolismn.gov) when using e-mail to communicate during the conduct of official City business, unless another domain name is approved by BIS and the Communications Department.

B. Departmental E-Mail Accounts: Departments can request and operate department-level e-mail accounts using the @minneapolismn.gov domain, or another domain name approved by BIS and the Communications Department, to meet legitimate business needs.

C. Retention of E-Mail Messages: Messages sent via e-mail meet the State of Minnesota definition of a record. As such, specific classifications of messages

sent via e-mail, including any attachments, shall be retained according to the City of Minneapolis Records Management Policy. The function and content of the message determines the value and corresponding retention requirements of the message. Backup tapes are only intended for disaster recovery or system failure. Backup tapes are not intended for archival or records retention purposes.

1. E-mail falls into two classifications: records of value and transitory records.
2. It is the user's responsibility to determine the nature and content of the E-mail and to assign the proper record series.
3. If it is a record of value, these records shall be saved by the user to a word processing or paper file for storage according to City retention requirements.
4. Transitory records may be deleted immediately.

V. Internet Use

A. Installation: In order to maintain consistent and cost effective support, employees shall not install their own Internet client support products on City-provided computers. All access to the enterprise network or the Internet shall be provided by the City's information technology department or its agent.

B. Costs: Users shall not access sites or download information that may result in an unapproved expense to the City. When allowed by City policy or procedure, City approved methods of payment can be used for business conducted on the Internet. Transactions are strictly limited to City business and only secure sites that provide encrypted transaction information can be used.

VI. Official City of Minneapolis Web Sites

A. External (Public) Web Site: The City is represented on the World Wide Web under the domain name minneapolismn.gov, which conforms to the General Services Administration's standard naming conventions for local government dot-gov domain names.

1. Standard Web URL: City departments will use the City's domain name (minneapolismn.gov) to reference all content published on the WWW/Internet related to official City business or services, whether or not the content is hosted on the City's external Web servers, unless otherwise approved by BIS and the Communications Department.

a. The URL (Web address) for the City's official Web site is www.minneapolismn.gov.

b. Department heads may request an alternate URL (e.g., sitename.minneapolismn.gov), based on the standard domain name, be assigned and propagated to the Internet by the City's information

technology department for official City Web services hosted by a non-City Internet Service Provider (ISP). BIS and the Communications Department may approve the use of other domain names.

Department heads requesting this service are responsible for all costs associated with managing and propagating this alternate City Web site domain name.

2. Non-standard domain names and URLs: Department heads may request an exception to use a non-standard domain name subject to the approval of BIS and the Communications Department.

- a. If the use of a non-standard domain name is approved the Department head requesting and receiving an exception is responsible for making sure that all content that can be accessed using the non-standard URL conforms to City Web Site Policy standards and guidelines.
- b. If the use of a non-standard domain name is approved the Department head requesting and receiving an exception is responsible for all costs associated with registering and maintaining a non-standard domain name, whether that domain is hosted on City equipment or by arrangement with a private Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- c. If the use of a non-standard domain name is approved the Department head requesting and receiving an exception shall maintain registration of the non-standard domain name. A department head would be considered in violation of this policy if the domain registration is allowed to expire without at least three weeks notice of the pending expiration to City's information technology department and the City's communications department to allow all links pointing to the URL(s) in question to be deleted or updated.

B. Intranet (Internal) Web Site: The City's information technology department will make available a server infrastructure and provide publishing support for departments that want to publish information on the City's intranet whether intended for departmental or enterprise use.

1. **Enterprise Intranet Web Servers:** Departments shall use the enterprise intranet Web servers to host their intranet content and services. They shall not operate Web server technology on any computer for the purposes of sharing information within a department or to other City departments, or outside the City's network. The only exception is content and services that are hosted on a Web server associated with a business system (such as HRIS) or by an external application service provider.
2. **CityTalk:** CityTalk is the City's primary channel for administrative communication with all users covered under this policy. <http://CityTalk>

shall be set as the "home page" for all Web browser installations for official City use.

- a. Departments are responsible for making relevant information available to employees or contractors who do not have Internet access or access to CityTalk as a normal part of their job.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities for Administrating the Policy and Defining Procedures

City Clerk:

1. The City Clerk is responsible for coordinating policy updates with an interdepartmental team.
2. The City Clerk is specifically responsible for the policy section covering retention of messages sent via e-mail and associated procedures.

BIS:

1. The BIS department is responsible for establishing standards and best practices governing the content, format and storage of electronic communications.
2. The BIS department is responsible for the establishment and management of e-mail limits including disk use, inbox size and message size.
3. The BIS department is responsible for establishing procedures for backup and storage management.
4. The BIS department is responsible for maintaining the physical infrastructure and technical environment on which the electronic communications systems reside.
5. The BIS department is responsible for the integrity and security of the electronic communication systems.
6. The BIS department, in conjunction with the Communications department, is responsible for defining the standards, procedures and best practices for providing information services on the Web and establishing a governing policy.
7. The BIS department is responsible for specifying standard tools and procedures, and providing training and other assistance so that departments can publish and maintain their external and internal content. Interactive application development, such as Web-enabled databases, will be handled through BIS' program management / e-government development process.

Communications:

1. The Communications Department is responsible for reviewing and approving (for content and appropriateness) all mass distribution (to all city employees or all city departments) e-mails messages.

2. The Communications Department is responsible for approving (in conjunction with BIS) requests for non-standard Web domain names.
3. The Communications Department is responsible for creating (in conjunction with BIS) standards and procedures for posting to the City's internal and external Web sites.
4. The Communications department, in conjunction with the BIS department, is responsible for defining the standards, procedures and best practices for providing information services on the Web and establishing a governing policy.

Attorney:

1. The City Attorney's Office is responsible for advising the City Clerk of changes in law that may require any modification in the policy or procedures implementing the policy.
2. The City Attorney's Office is responsible for assisting with legal interpretation of the policy language.
3. The City Attorney's Office is responsible for assisting departments in determining when there may be a violation of the policy.
4. The City Attorney's Office is responsible for alerting appropriate personnel when records need to be preserved for litigation.

Human Resources:

1. The Human Resources Department is responsible for enterprise policy training and education by providing information to new employees during New Employee Orientation.
2. The Human Resources Department is responsible for assisting departments in determining when there may be a violation of the policy and advising departments on appropriate discipline.