

**CITY OF BEAUMONT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Policy Number: 7.2

Subject: Internet Policy

Effective Date: October 11 2007

Approved by: Kyle Hayes/10/11/07
City Manager/Date

Bart Bartkowiak/10/11/07
Technology Services Director/Date

This policy shall apply to all full-time and auxiliary employees.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- A. Provide utilization guidelines for employees who have access to electronic mail, the Internet and telecommunication resources which allow them to communicate with other employees, other governmental entities, companies and individuals for the benefit of the city.
- B. Ensure proper use of the Internet and respect the legal protection provided to programs and data by copyright and license.
- C. Protect data from unauthorized use or disclosure as required by state and federal laws and city regulations.

II. GENERAL GUIDELINES

Internet use should be for legitimate city business only; however, brief and occasional personal use (i.e., surfing, browsing) is acceptable if the following conditions are met.

- A. Prohibited on devices connected to TCIC/NCIC at the Police Department.
- B. Personal use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Use is to be limited to scheduled lunch hours and during limited periods before and after the employee's regularly scheduled working hours. The privilege may be revoked at any time without prior notification and/or approval of the user.
- C. A record of all Internet sites visited by employees is kept by TS for a minimum of 30 days.
- D. **Employees have no right to privacy with regard to Internet use.** Management has the ability and right to view employees' usage patterns and take action to assure that city Internet resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of productivity.

- E. The Internet path record is the property of the city and therefore the taxpayers. Such information is subject to the Texas Public Information Act and the laws applicable to records retention.
- F. Employees using the Internet shall identify themselves honestly, accurately, and completely (including one's company affiliation and function where requested) when providing such information.
- G. Only those employees or officials who are expressly authorized to speak to the media or to the public on behalf of the city may represent the city within any news group or chat room. Other employees may participate in news groups or chat rooms in the course of business when relevant to their duties, but must do so as individuals speaking for themselves and must include a disclaimer in their comments similar to the following:

"This contains the thoughts and opinions of (employee name) and does not represent official city policy nor in my capacity as an official city employee."
- H. All use of the Internet must be in compliance with all applicable laws and policies (federal, state and local, in addition to city policies). The Internet is not to be used for illegal purposes.
- I. Each user must sign a written statement acknowledging receipt of city rules, procedures, guidelines, and the consequences of violating such policies prior to being granted access.
- J. Downloads
 - 1. To ensure copyright compliance and to prevent the potential loading of programs containing hidden code to destroy or allow unapproved access, program downloads are prohibited. (Exception: Technology Services Department is allowed to download program fixes from known vendors.)
 - 2. Virus checks must be performed on the data prior to loading to city equipment.
- K. Users shall not use or develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage or alter the software components of a computer.
- L. This policy shall apply to all forms of use of the Internet, and not supersede or limit any state or federal laws, nor any city policies regarding confidentiality, information dissemination, or standards of conduct. This resource, as with any other public resource, demands those entrusted with the privilege of its use be accountable.

III. RESTRICTIONS

- A. Accessing, posting or sharing any racist, sexist, threatening, obscene or otherwise objectionable material (i.e., visual, textual, or auditory entity) is prohibited.

- B. Personal use of the Internet should not impede the conduct of city business; only incidental amounts (before and after regular work hours and during lunch) of employee time should be used to attend to personal matters. Surfing the net for excessive periods of time without job-related justification is strictly prohibited.
- C. Playing or downloading games or programs is strictly prohibited.
- D. Billable charges for accessing information are prohibited unless previously arranged for by the department director.
- E. The Internet is not to be used for personal monetary interest or gain.
- F. Employees should not subscribe to mailing lists or mail services strictly for personal use and should not participate in electronic discussion groups (i.e., list server, Usenet, news groups, chat rooms) for personal purposes.
- G. Personal Internet use should not cause the city to incur a direct cost in addition to the general overhead of an Internet connection.
- H. Employees must not intentionally use the Internet facilities to disable, impair, or overload performance of any computer system or network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.
- I. Since the city has to pay for the bandwidth used to access the Internet, listening to internet radio, playing music, video or other media on line, and other personal interactive accesses are prohibited.

IV. PENALTIES

Abuse or unlawful use of the privilege shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Unlawful use may result in referral for criminal prosecution.

Attachment A

Department/Division

Please complete the following acknowledging you have received, read and understand the following City of Beaumont policies.

_____ (Initials) Computer Policy 7.0

_____ (initials) E-Mail Policy 7.1

_____ (initials) Internet Policy 7.2

Print Name

Signature

Date