

## **POLICY (internet use)**

Staff are required to comply with these guidelines and be aware that e-mail makes it easy for all users to circulate messages and copy consent. Similarly staff will have access to a vast range of material on the Internet. Problems can therefore arise in that misuse/abuse of the e-mail system could lead to:-

- sexual and racial harassment and disability discrimination;
- intentional or inadvertent revelation of confidential information;
- junk e-mail;
- copyright infringement;
- wasting/draining of employer and computer resources/capabilities and
- e-mail forgery;
- defamation.

### **Use of e-mail**

- Advice given on e-mail has the same legal bearing as any other written advice, For formal communications a permanent record needs to be kept.
- E-mail communications, either internally or externally, are not guaranteed to be private or to arrive at their destination either within a particular time, or at all.
- Users **must not** transmit confidential, personal or other sensitive information via e-mail, unless authorised by the Director/Manager of \_\_\_\_\_ or appropriate encryption is applied or the client has consented.
- Users **must not** send unsolicited, irrelevant or inappropriate e-mails.
- Users **must not** send abusive e-mails, even in response to abuse directed at them.
- Users **must not** use e-mails to sexually or racially harass other users, fellow employees or in any way to harass or threaten anyone in any manner.
- Users **must not** participate in chain or pyramid letters or similar schemes.
- Users **must not** send anything at all which is defamatory.
- The inappropriate use of upper case in e-mail is generally interpreted as SHOUTING and should be avoided.
- Users **should not** forward materials e-mailed to them personally to others, particularly to internet newsgroups or mailing lists, without the permission of the originator.
- If the message is sent to multiple address, it is preferable to reflect this in the body of the message. Not all recipients can properly identify "copy" addresses.

- If a user has their e-mail address published in any media, they must be aware of this and the responsibilities that result.
- It is polite to acknowledge incoming e-mail if it is received from an external source who may not have the means to know if the e-mail has arrived.
- If a user receives an e-mail in error, they must inform the sender immediately and delete the message from the system.
- Users **must not** use anonymous mailing services to conceal their identity when mailing through the internet, falsify e-mails to make them appear to originate from someone else, or provide false information to any internet service which requests name, e-mail address or other details.
- Users tend to regard e-mail like telephone calls and to be less discreet than they would in a letter. This increases the risk of defamatory statements. Therefore, sending personal e-mails from any system should be **discouraged** (see "Personal e-mail" and Internet use below).
- Viruses can also be transmitted via e-mail messages to many users at one time. Care should be taken to ensure that all data sent or received is virus-free.  
In particular, you should:
  - Maintain a virus checking system and keep it up to date.
  - Maintain any virus fire walls to protect against viruses on the internet.
  - Scan discs from clients or other sources outside the organisation for viruses and take precautions when opening e-mail attachments.
- Users should try to avoid sending excessive large e-mails or attachments unless absolutely necessary. Contact for information on how to utilise compression techniques where appropriate.
- Users **must not** download software from the internet or install software on computers without the consent of .
- Before sending an attachment, ensure that the recipient(s) use the same software as was used to originate the attachment. Also, consider whether the use of an attachment adds to the value of the message; if not, keep it simple and send text.
- Users are encouraged to practice good "housekeeping" with regard to e-mail facilities, especially given that individual storage restrictions are in place. It is therefore the user's responsibility to store only items that may be required for retrospective access.
- Users **must** make sure that a disclaimer is attached to outgoing e-mails.
- Users **must** make sure that the appropriate authority has been obtained before transmitting any company information or advice.

- Users **must** retain hard copies of any e-mails sent during the course of contract negotiations or in other appropriate instances.
- Users **must** follow the guidance in the Computer Use Policy attached.

## **Personal e-mail and Internet use**

### Use of Internet

- Users **must** not view or download any obscene or discriminating material.
- Users **must** restrict their use of the Internet to work related matters only.
- Users are reminded that during their contractual hours they must devote their time and attention to the company's business.

reserves the right to access any users e-mails at any time whether circulated internally or externally and to monitor use of the Internet. This is necessary to monitor the quality of work and protect legitimate interests but will generally aim to minimise the extent of such monitoring.

In general, sending personal e-mail is **discouraged**, but if it is necessary, its content should be kept to an absolute minimum. Sending personal e-mail should in no way interfere with or disrupt the work of **XXXX**, users or colleagues. Whenever possible, personal e-mail should be conducted **outside** normal working/opening hours.

### **Further Information**

If you are unsure about the implications of this policy or about the technical requirements involved, contact \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ for further information.

### **Discipline**

Users should be aware that breach of these guidelines may amount to misconduct and may result in disciplinary sanctions. Repeated breaches or a serious breach could lead to dismissal.

### **Consent**

By reading these guidelines you will be deemed to have consented to the monitoring of your e-mail and Internet use and to the company holding personal data for monitoring purposes.

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