



POLICY No.: J-1
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TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN POLICY

Policy on Computer and Software Use

Computer Usage Policy

This document formalizes the policy for employees and officials of the Town of West Boylston on the use of information technology (IT) resources including, but not limited to, computers, printers and other peripherals, programs, data, local and wide area networks, electronic mail (e-mail), telephones, cellular phones, pagers, "blackberry"-style devices, facsimile machines and the Internet. All IT resources operating within the Municipal Building, in Departments, Boards and Commissions under the Town Administrator are the property of the Town of West Boylston. Users of such IT resources must be supplied with a copy of this Computer Usage Policy and must agree to comply with its provisions by signing the Computer Usage Policy Acknowledgment.

Use of the Town of West Boylston's IT resources by any employee, contractor, consultant and/or volunteer ("user") shall constitute acceptance of the terms of this Policy and any such additional related policies that may be issued by the town.

Access and use of the Town's IT resources is intended for business related purposes, including communicating with coworkers and colleagues, and researching topics relevant to Town business. All existing state, federal and local laws and Town policies apply to your conduct while using Town IT resources, particularly those that govern intellectual property protection, sexual or other harassment, misuse of Town resources, privacy rights and confidentiality.

1. User Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of any person who uses town IT resources to read, understand, and follow this policy. In addition, users are expected to exercise reasonable judgment in interpreting this policy and in making decisions about the use of town IT resources. Any person with questions regarding the application or meaning of this policy should seek clarification from appropriate management. Failure to observe this policy may subject individuals to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

2. Acceptable Uses

The Town of West Boylston believes that the use of IT resources empowers users and makes their jobs more fulfilling by allowing them to deliver better services at lower costs. As such, employees and officials are encouraged to use IT resources to the fullest extent in pursuit of their position's goals and objectives. This use may include accessing education and research tools and using properly licensed software.

Use of the Town's IT resources for personal use is allowed when limited and governed by the same tests of reasonableness as personal phone calls. These tests include:

- There is no cost associated with the use.

- The use is moderate in time.
- The use does not interfere with the employee's work or the work of their co-workers.

Personal use must not interfere with the town's business needs or operation in any way and must not violate the law or any other aspect of this policy.

3. Unacceptable Uses of Town IT Resources

Unless such use is reasonably related to a user's job, it is unacceptable for any person to use town IT resources:

- in furtherance of any illegal act, including violation of any criminal or civil laws or regulations, whether local, state or federal
- for any political, religious or commercial activity
- to send discriminatory, 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 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 intentional propagation of computer viruses or other harmful programs
- to intercept communications intended for other persons
- to misrepresent either the Town of West Boylston or a person's role in the Town of West Boylston
- to distribute chain letters
- to access online gambling sites
- to libel or otherwise defame any person
- to download any software or file in violation of copyright laws
- to download or install games or other programs for amusement/entertainment purposes.

Inadvertent or accidental browsing to inappropriate Internet sites or receiving inappropriate unsolicited e-mail shall not be considered an "Unacceptable Use" under this document. However, users should exercise caution when opening e-mail and refrain from responding to solicitations from unknown senders. These activities can put the security of the network at risk.

4. Data Confidentiality

In the course of performing their jobs, Town employees and officials 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 officials to acquire access to confidential data unless such access is required by their jobs or positions. Under no circumstances may employees or officials disseminate any confidential information that they have rightful access to, unless such dissemination is required by their jobs or positions.

5. 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 users respect the rights of intellectual property owners. Users should exercise care and judgment when copying or distributing computer programs or information that could reasonably be expected to be copyrighted.

6. Computer Viruses

Users should exercise reasonable precautions in order to prevent the introduction of a computer virus into the local area or wide area networks. Virus scanning software should be used to check any software downloaded from the Internet or obtained from any questionable source. In addition, executable files (program files that end in ".exe") should not be stored on or run from network drives. It is good practice to scan floppy disks and other portable data

media or devices periodically to see if they have been infected.

7. Network Security

Most desktop computers are connected to a local area network, which links computers with the Town servers. As such, it is critically important that users take particular care to avoid compromising the security of the network.

- Users should never share their passwords with anyone else, with the exception of the System administrator, and should notify Town Computer Administration if they suspect that their passwords have been compromised.
- Users who will be leaving their PCs unattended for extended periods should either log off the network or otherwise password protect access to the system.
- No user is allowed to access the Internet or other external networks via a modem unless they have received specific permission from Town Computer Administration personnel or the Town Administrator.
- Wireless Access Points or wireless network adapters are not allowed for use on the Town network unless specific permission from Town Computer Administration personnel or the Town Administrator has been granted.
- **Telnet** connections to external computers or network are prohibited without specific authorization of Computer Administration personnel.
- The use of **ftp** (File Transfer Protocol) or visits to **ftp** web sites is restricted to updating approved applications in use by the Town of West Boylston. Computer Administration personnel should be made aware of any updates performed.

8. E-mail

Since the Town's e-mail addresses identify the Town of West Boylston as the sender, users should consider e-mail as letters sent on an official letterhead. Users should ensure that all e-mails are written in a professional and courteous tone. Although many users regard e-mail as being like a telephone in offering a quick, informal way to communicate, users should remember that e-mails can be stored, copied, printed or forwarded by recipients. As such, users should not write anything in an e-mail message that they would not feel just as comfortable putting into a memorandum or letter. In Massachusetts, e-mail is considered a public record.

- E-mail messages that do not reflect the official position of the Town of West Boylston should contain the following disclaimer: "The opinions expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the Town of West Boylston."
- When forwarding an e-mail message, a user may not modify the message without explicitly indicating the exact nature of the changes.
- Any e-mail message that is designated as privileged or private may not be forwarded without proof of consent from the originator.
- Notwithstanding the Town's right to retrieve and read any e-mail messages, e-mail should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any e-mail message that is not intended for them.
- Users should be aware that opening programs or files attached to e-mail messages may cause computer viruses to infect the Town's IT resources with viruses or other detrimental or unwanted programs. Only open attachments from anticipated and trusted sources.
- Users shall not broadcast messages to all employees via e-mail without permission from the Town Administrator.
- The Secretary of State's Office of the Commonwealth has determined that e-mail qualifies as "public records." Users should retain either a printed or digital record of e-mail sent by or received through the Town's IT resources, in the same manner as paper records are kept and in accordance with the Record Retention requirements.
- All e-mail must include the following message:

This electronic message is confidential and intended for the named recipient only. Any dissemination, disclosure or distribution of the contents of this communication is unlawful and prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please contact by return e-mail or telephone (your phone number), and delete the copy you received. Thank you.

9. Portable Computers

Some employees and officials are provided with portable computers to conduct business while not in the office or in the normal course of their job or position. The policies contained in this document apply to all portable computers owned or operated by the Town of West Boylston. Personal use of portable computers owned or operated by the Town should be limited to the greatest extent possible.

Employees and officials using portable computers offsite are responsible for protecting the computer and any confidential data contained on it. Work on confidential business should not be conducted in a public place where others could see the work. Portable computers must be password protected to prevent unauthorized access to Town data. Any breaches of computer security or theft should be reported to the Computer Administration personnel immediately.

10. Telephone Usage

Telephones (including cellular phones) are provided for business use. Personal telephone calls may be permitted, but users should exercise good judgment in making such calls. Managers/departments heads are responsible for monitoring their employees' telephone usage. Excessive usage for non-business purposes, as well as misuse of telephones, such as to make harassing or threatening calls, may result in discipline, up to and including termination from employment.

11. No Expectation of Privacy

Town IT resources are the property of the Town of West Boylston and are to be used in conformance with this policy. The Town retains the right to inspect any Town-owned or leased computer or electronic communications equipment, any data contained in such equipment, and any data sent or received by that equipment. The Town will exercise that right when reasonable and in pursuit of legitimate needs for supervision, control and the efficient and proper operation of the workplace. Users should be aware that appropriately authorized network administrators, in order to ensure proper network operations, routinely monitor network traffic, and/or access all files, including e-mail files and Internet user history stored on any equipment. Use of Town IT resources constitutes express consent for the Town to monitor and/or inspect any data that users create or receive, any messages they send or receive, and any web sites that they access.

All electronic files and documents originating from or passing through the Town's IT resources are considered to be the property of the Town of West Boylston. In addition, all electronic information stored on public computers may be sought in the context of a public records request. Employees are advised that personal information sent from, received by, or stored on the town's equipment may, under certain circumstances and legal interpretations, be subject to disclosure under such a request and users should act accordingly.

12. Violations of Policy

A violation/violations of this Policy may result in either the suspension or total loss of privilege to use the Town's IT resources. It may also result in disciplinary action being taken against an employee, up to and including termination from employment. Additionally, users shall be personally liable for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the Town related to violations of this Policy. Similarly, the illegal use of the Town's IT resources may result in referral to law enforcement authorities. Employees shall report violations of this Policy to their supervisor or the Town Administrator. Retaliation against another user for reporting a violation or violations of this Policy, including the use of e-mail or the Internet in a retaliatory manner, is strictly prohibited.