

COUNTY OF WARREN
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Internet Access and Use Policy

PURPOSE

To establish the overall policy for Warren County for access to and use of the Internet.
To provide a framework that maximizes the use of various Internet services to:

- provide information to the public;
- allow County departments or agencies and their employees to fully utilize Internet resources to help further the missions of their respective department or agency; and,
- establish management controls to ensure the quality and security of information posted on the Internet.

SCOPE

This policy shall be in effect for all departments or agencies of Warren County government.

This policy is specifically directed to all employees who are authorized by a County department or agency to access and use the Internet.

This policy encompasses all decisions and activities affecting or affected by access or use of the Internet by a County department or agency and or its employees.

Warren County government will maintain a secure, coordinated and cost effective approach to Internet access and use by County employees. To support access to the Internet, certain Internet Access Providers have been established for Warren County government. For County departments or agencies connected to the County wide area network, Internet access is provided through the network connection.

To control unnecessary County spending and avoid duplication of effort, separate access contracts should only be negotiated by departments when access to the County wide area network is not available. Any separate access contracts should be reviewed by the Information Systems Director to ensure that there is not technical incompatibility and/or there are no special functionality requirements. Any department with Internet access will be able to have Warren County e-mail-messaging accounts established, therefore separate

e-mail-messaging accounts should not be negotiated into any separate access accounts. If such accounts do exist, said accounts are subject to the E-mail-Messaging Policy.

Employee access to the Internet through established County facilities is offered as a tool for meeting the programmatic needs of the County. County provided Internet access is therefore considered County property. Access to and use of the Internet via County Internet access provider(s) is for conducting County business, and only limited personal use that falls within the guidelines listed in this policy may be permitted at the discretion of the employee's department or agency.

Use of the Internet is a privilege which constitutes the acceptance of responsibilities and obligations that are subject to federal, state, and local laws. Appropriate use must be legal; ethical, and respectful of intellectual property, ownership of data, systems security mechanisms, and individual rights to privacy and freedom from intimidation, harassment and annoyance.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee

- Comply with this policy and with all standards and guidelines referenced within this policy.
- Comply with the County's E-mail Messaging Policy.

Departmental

- Authorize departmental employee access to the Internet, maintain a list of the authorized employees, and communicate any required changes to the Director of Information Systems.
- Ensure that only duly authorized persons access and use the Internet.
- Ensure that necessary virus protection software is used.
- Monitor employee access and use of the Internet to ensure that it is appropriate and consistent with departmental program goals.
- Establish internal controls for ensuring that employees are familiar with this policy and with all referenced standards and guidelines.

Information Systems

- Publish guidelines for acceptable Internet access and use.
- Maintain and adjust, as necessary, a contract for a County Internet access provider.
- Maintain and adjust, as necessary, a contract for e-mail-messaging system services.
- Issue departmental TCP/IP addresses as necessary.
- Assist departments with physical connections to the County Internet portal.
- Monitor the performance and capacity levels of the Internet access infrastructure.
- Ensure that security and firewall structures are operational and monitored.

- Provide departments with access to monitoring information on employee Internet access. The type of monitoring software that is available may limit this information.

COMPLIANCE AND VIOLATIONS

Use of County provided Internet access is a privilege which can and will be revoked at any time for violation of this policy or any standards or guidelines referenced herein, including the provisions of the County's E-mail Messaging Policy.

Violations will be dealt with promptly, and appropriate remedial actions will be taken.

GUIDELINES

These guidelines shall be in effect for and satisfied by all departments or agencies of the County of Warren.

These guidelines are specifically directed to all employees who are authorized by a department to access and use the Internet.

GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL USE OF INTERNET SERVICES

County departments and their employees are encouraged to use the Internet to its fullest potential to further their respective missions, to provide service of the highest quality to constituents, and to discover new ways to use resources to enhance service.

Guideline 1: County employees should use the Internet, when appropriate, to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively. The Internet provides access to a wide variety of information resources that can aid County employees in the performance of their jobs. Examples of job-related use of the Internet include: accessing external databases and files to obtain reference information or conduct research; corresponding with constituents; disseminating documents to individuals or groups; and participating in and reading electronic mail discussion groups on job-related topics.

Guideline 2: County employees must conform to reasonable professional standards for use of Internet services as detailed in this policy, which sets out specific rules for each of the available Internet services, as well as the County's E-mail Messaging Policy. County employees have an obligation to learn about network etiquette, customs, and courtesies. Accepted procedures and guidelines are to be followed when using electronic mail communications, participating in electronic mail discussion groups, using remote computer services, transferring files from other computers, or disseminating information to others on the Internet. Employees also have an obligation to be aware of computer security and privacy concerns and to guard against computer viruses.

Guideline 3: Use of the Internet by County employees is primarily for County business. All County employees are responsible for complying with County and departmental

policies, guidelines, and standards of conduct on the use of the Internet. Violations may result in a revocation of Internet access privileges and any other applicable penalties or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Illegal activity will be subject to prosecution by the appropriate authorities. Employees shall respect intellectual property rights at all times when obtaining information over the Internet. Employees shall not use County equipment to access the Internet in order to lobby public officials at any level and/or ask others to lobby on their behalf. Warren County has the right to monitor at any time the Internet activities of employees when using County equipment, in order to prevent activities that are prohibited by law, that violate state regulations, that might jeopardize the technical systems of the County government, or that violate County and/or departmental policies, guidelines, and standards of conduct on the use of the Internet.

Guideline 4: Use of fee-for-service providers on the Internet is not allowed unless the necessary approvals and funding have been obtained in advance. Any individual who obligates the County to pay for services without prior approval is personally liable for these costs and subject to disciplinary action.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR USE OF INTERNET SERVICES

County employees have an obligation to use their access to the Internet in a responsible and informed way, conforming to network etiquette, customs, and courtesies. Use of the Internet encompasses many different interconnected networks and computer systems. Many of these systems are provided free of charge by universities, public service organizations, and commercial companies. Each system has its own rules and limitations, and guests on these systems have an obligation to learn and abide by the rules. The Internet is an unsecured system that in itself has no security controls and should never be used by County employees to transmit confidentially sensitive information, unless such transmissions are encrypted to ensure security.

When using the Internet, County employees should identify themselves properly. Employees should be careful about how they represent themselves, given that what they say or do could be interpreted as an opinion or policy of County government. Employees should be aware that their conduct can reflect on the reputation of their department and its employees. Employees should post or send only those messages and/or files that are permissible as identified in County and/or departmental policies on use of the Internet and the County's E-Mail Messaging Policy.

County employees should not act as spokespersons for their department by attempting to answer every question asked via the Internet, unless authorized to do so. Employees should reply only to those questions that are within the scope of their work for the County. Employees should handle Internet queries about agency matters that are outside their immediate scope of work as they would handle telephone inquiries.

County employees should not give out personal information (such as home address, home telephone number, credit card information, etc.) in public areas of the Internet.

The privilege of County provided access to the Internet may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct. Examples of inappropriate conduct include (but are not limited to):

- use of the Internet for unlawful activities;
- sending anonymous communications or misrepresentation of oneself or one's department;
- lobbying public officials;
- sending chain letters;
- using official dissemination tools to distribute personal information;
- other activities that could cause congestion and disruption of networks and systems;
- the transmission or retention of discriminatory, threatening, harassing or abusive language and images, including any messages containing derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual orientation;
- the transmission or retention of sexually explicit or pornographic images or other materials, or abusive, profane or offensive language;
- the communication of any solicitations, whether for charitable, personal, religious, or other non-County business;
- the deliberate propagation of computer worms and viruses.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL SERVICES ON THE INTERNET

The content and maintenance of a user's electronic mailbox and shared file storage areas are the user's responsibility. Users should:

- Check electronic mail daily.
- Use signature blocks on electronic mail messages to recipients outside of the agency. Signature blocks should be short, preferably not more than six lines, and should include the user's name, departmental information, phone number, and postal address.
- Be aware that electronic mail is not private communication, because others may be able to read or access mail. Electronic mail may best be regarded as a postcard rather than as a sealed letter.
- Use capitalization sparingly. Capitalizing long portions of a communication is called "shouting" and is considered rude. *Asterisks* or underscore_characters can be used for emphasis.
- Delete unwanted messages or files immediately, because they take up disk storage space.
- Keep messages stored in electronic mailboxes to a minimum.
- Transfer to disk for future reference any messages or files to be saved.
- Seek to minimize argument on the Internet. If one is inflamed, either ignore the argument, respond with a rational presentation of one's views, or admit an error (if appropriate). If the argument continues and/or is extraordinarily

threatening whenever one goes on the Internet, the user should contact the Director of Information Systems.

- Allow adequate time for electronic messages to travel on the Internet. Also, allow time for response to postings.
- Comply with the County's E-mail Messaging Policy.

GUIDELINE FOR USE OF ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION/NEWSGROUP SERVICES ON THE INTERNET

County employees who participate in electronic discussion groups must learn and abide by the rules and etiquette of those groups. Subscriptions to this type of service are to be used with great caution. Discussion/Newsgroup services can automatically generate high volumes of unwanted mail. This can have significant impacts on network performance, especially if large files are involved. When using electronic discussion group services, some general guidelines are:

- Use Discussion/Newsgroups only when absolutely necessary.
- Retain initial welcome messages or information files received when first subscribing to a discussion group.
- Observe the conventions and particular interests of the group prior to becoming an active participant.
- Use signature blocks as the bottom of electronic mail messages. Signature blocks should be short, preferably not more than six lines, and should include the user's name, department information, phone number, and postal address.
- Keep messages short and to the point. Generally limit messages to one subject.
- Act in a professional and courteous manner.
- Be clear and concise. Re-read messages before sending them to be sure they will not be misunderstood. Read all messages carefully before responding.
- Be aware of the potential audience in any discussion group and address them accordingly.
- Be aware that the information available via the Internet is provided "as is." Much of the information will be good. Some of the information will be mediocre. In some cases, the information may be misleading or fraudulent. Check information obtained via the Internet with other sources, and attempt to discern fact from opinion.
- Cite all quotations, references, and sources.
- Use capitalization sparingly. Capitalizing long portions of a communication is called "shouting" and is considered rude. *Asterisks* or underscore_characters can be used for emphasis.
- Use discretion when sending long documents to discussion groups. It is preferable to reference the source of a document and provide instructions on how to obtain a copy.
- Respect copyright and licensing agreements.
- Include only the relevant portions when quoting from a previous message. Clearly identify the quoted portions.

- Unsubscribe from a list when leaving the County Internet account. In this case, unsubscribing from a list eliminates problems with “undeliverable mail” messages being transmitted to other users.
- Comply with the County’s E-mail Messaging Policy.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF TELNET SERVICES ON THE INTERNET

When using TELNET to access remote computer systems, County employees should remember that they are guests on another institution’s machine. To help ensure that other Internet users have access to the same information in a timely manner, remote users should observe a few basic courtesies:

- Logoff a remote computer system when finished. Maintaining a connection that is not actively being used may prevent others from connecting to that system.
- Read or obtain instructions or documentation files when using a system for the first time.
- Be aware of time and resource limitations of remote systems. Adhere to any stated restrictions.

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF FTP (FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL) SERVICES ON THE INTERNET

When using FTP, county employees are guests on other systems. Also, only select County employees will be given access to FTP functions through the County firewall. To ensure that other Internet users have access to the information, a few basic guidelines should be followed:

- Login as specified to complete work functions and logoff the remote computer system when finished.
- Avoid transferring files during peak business hours for the remote system, whenever possible.
- Be aware of time and resource limitations of remote systems. Adhere to any stated restrictions.
- Remove files transferred to shared system areas as soon as possible. Copy the files to local disk if needed for future use.
- Use common sense when transferring files from the Internet. All files transferred from the Internet, especially program files, should be checked for computer viruses.
- Transfer files directly to diskettes rather than to the hard drive, if possible. Check transferred files for viruses. Do not use infected files.
- Respect copyright and licensing agreements of transmitted files.