

CITY OF SPOKANE PERSONNEL POLICY

HR-55

SUBJECT: EMAIL

Effective: February 1, 2002

Submitted by the Human Resources Dept

This policy applies to: ALL EMPLOYEES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

Regulations affecting this policy:

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to define individual and departmental responsibilities for the acquisition and use of the City's information systems.
- 1.2 This policy is divided into the following sections:

- SECTION 1 - GENERAL
- SECTION 2 - STATEMENT OF POLICY
- SECTION 3 - GENERAL PROVISIONS
- SECTION 4 - CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION
- SECTION 5 - RETENTION
- SECTION 6 - ADMINISTRATION

2. STATEMENT OF POLICY

- 2.1 It is the policy of the City of Spokane to encourage use of electronic communications, including e-mail, the Internet, and the Intranet, as a means of increasing employee productivity, thereby improving the quality of service to the citizens of Spokane, the productivity of the City workforce, and the overall cost effectiveness of City operations. Departments may adopt policies consistent with this policy.
- 2.2 Electronic records, including e-mail messages, are public records under Washington State's Public Disclosure Act (RCW 42.17) and the law governing preservation and destruction of public records (RCW 40.14).

3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 3.1 Electronic data, voice and e-mail boxes, pager memory banks, and other electronic storage systems are the property of the City and may be accessed by members of the public under various state or federal laws. Such data should be considered information available to the public. Consequently, information may be "opened", "read", or inspected by the City without notice and without employee permission.
- 3.2 Those who use City electronic communications services are expected to do so responsibly, with professional courtesy and conduct, and to comply with State and Federal laws.
- 3.3 Since e-mail is a business communications tool, all e-mail messages should be businesslike and professional in tone and content. Obscene, offensive, illegal, or unprofessional communication through e-mail is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Statement of a political nature.
 - b. Obscene, profane, abusive, or threatening language or graphic representations except for legitimate business purposes.
 - c. Statements or graphic representations that may be construed as harassing, discriminatory, or offensive by reference to race, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other legally protected status.
 - d. The reference to or discussion of any sexual acts, sexual relationships, dates, dating, personal relationships, or sexually related graphics.
 - e. Communications that violate the personal privacy of, or disrespectful of, any individual.
 - f. Information on union activity, unless approved by the Human Resources Director in advance.
 - g. Communications in furtherance of any illegal activity, including, but not limited to, football pools and other forms of gambling.
 - h. Hosting the business transactions of any non-City enterprise, either profit or non-profit, or promulgating electronic literature from these activities.

- 3.4 Employees should check their e-mail daily, respond to those messages that need to be responded to, move messages to personal folders for retention if required, and delete those messages that have been read and are no longer pertinent.
- 3.5 Employees are allowed limited use of equipment and facilities to access the email system for purposes other than that directly or indirectly relate to the activities of the City under the following but not limited to conditions:
 - a. The use causes no additional cost to the City of Spokane.
 - b. The equipment being utilized is normally utilized by the employee, and there is no disruption/disturbance to another employee's work area.
 - c. Time spent processing personal email does not negatively impact the employee's ability to do his/her job.
 - d. Use of the equipment does not disrupt other City functions.
 - e. Use does not violate any other City policy.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

- 4.1 Electronic mail is not confidential and is nearly always a public record. Electronic mail should not be used for the transmission of truly confidential matters. Employees should be mindful that electronic mail maybe retrieved even after being "deleted".
- 4.2 System administrators and managers may inspect, monitor, and disclose electronic communications as necessary to comply with state and federal law and City policy.
- 4.3 Under the state Public Records law, electronic data are treated the same as paper data. Such electronic data are considered public documents and are nearly always subject to inspection by members of the public. Exceptions to the law, however, apply to electronic communications under the same conditions as paper data. At the time that the City is in receipt of a valid request for individual email messages, the system administrator will block access to the requested files and copy them to a separate directory for legal review prior to release. Employees whose electronic files have been requested will be notified, if possible, before disclosure to the requesting party. For requests of information from the Police or Fire Departments, the appropriate Chief will be notified before disclosure.

5. RETENTION

5.1 User email, stored in the Inbox on the City maintained email server will be stored for a period of 30 days (one month). No more than 100 megabytes will be stored on the City maintained email server at any given time for any user. Mail stored in personal folders will be backed up nightly and stored on a City maintained file server. It is the policy of the City of Spokane to restrict message size (including attachments) to 10 megabytes.

6. ADMINISTRATION

6.1 The Human Resources Department, in cooperation with Management Information Services, is responsible for administering this policy.

Jack Lynch
City Administrator

Date

[policy\HR-55Email]