

# Grant County Personnel Policy

## 512.3 Electronic Communications

512.3.1 Specifics: Grant County provides employees, in applicable positions and work needs, with electronic communication resources and authorized access for the purpose of efficiently conducting County business. The County reserves the right to change these policies, with or without prior notice, at any time as may be required under the circumstances. Each office or department may adopt a more strict set of policies regarding electronic communication resources and their uses. Employees should discuss questions regarding electronic communication usage with their supervisors.

- a. Electronic communication systems include, but are not limited to, electronic mail systems, network schedulers, voice mail systems, facsimile devices, teleconferencing, cellular telephones and other electronic communication media which generate, store, transmit and display messages for internal and external County business communication purposes;
- b. These systems are the properties of Grant County and are to be returned at separation of employment;
- c. All electronic communication resources are provided by Grant County for the sole purpose of performing business related tasks;
- d. Use of electronic communication resources at home is allowed only with previous authorization;
- e. Grant County prohibits the use of electronic communication resources in ways that are in violation of County policy or policies, disruptive, offensive to others, illegal, and/or harmful to morale;
- f. Employees should not leave voicemail messages or transmit e-mails that they would not want someone other than the intended receiver to hear or read;
- g. Should an employee receive a voicemail message or e-mail that was clearly intended for someone else, the employee is not authorized to use the information contained within the message or discuss same with anyone other than his or her supervisor.

512.3.2 Property of Grant County: All electronic communication resources and all information transmitted by and received from, or stored on, County systems are the property of Grant County.

- a. Such resources are subject to disclosure to law enforcement or government officials or to other third parties through subpoena or other process, including, without limitation,

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- requests for public records, as well as disciplinary proceedings;
- b. Users should have no expectation of privacy as to any information created or maintained in or on the County's property or transmitted or stored through Grant County's electronic communication resources, except as otherwise provided by law, such as attorney-client privileged and confidential communications;
  - c. Users are required to allow authorized personnel, including his or her supervisor, access to review all information created, stored, sent or received on the County's electronic communications resources;
  - d. Despite security precautions, there is no absolute in preventing or ensuring unauthorized access of stored files; and
  - e. Deleted messages or files are recoverable, often months or years after the initial and/or final communication.

## 512.3.3 Monitoring

- a. To ensure that the use of County electronic communication resources and records are consistent with the County's legitimate business interests and obligations – which include but are not limited to determining compliance with local, state or federal laws, assessing employee performance, evaluating excessive and/or improper use, and/or investigating improper disclosure of confidential information – Grant County reserves the right to review, monitor, intercept, copy, delete and disclose all matters contained in or transmitted by such systems and records at any time, with or without notice; and
- b. The County reserves the right to override any passwords, encryption or codes for these purposes. The County will use automated software to monitor any message sent electronically. The County reserves the right to use any software and/or programs to retrieve information, including deleted messages.

## 512.3.4 Personal Use

- a. Personal use of County electronic communications is regulated by Section 512 and its subsections; and
- b. A supervisor may impose additional restrictions regarding personal use; however, all employees must abide by County policy regardless of an Elected Official's position regarding personal use of County resources.

## 512.3.5 Copyrights: Users should be aware that federal copyright laws, regardless of whether a copyright notice appears on the work,

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might protect any information, software or graphic on the Internet. Users may not duplicate or transmit such material or download shareware without written authorization from the Director of Technology Services.

512.3.6

Security: Technology Services must authorize any and all applications and users are required to scan freeware, shareware or any downloaded application for viruses using authorized procedures and software.

- a. Users must never open, execute or run unsolicited binary code e-mail attachments;
- b. Users are required to take all necessary steps to prevent unauthorized access to County information;
- c. Users must keep passwords secure and unknown to all other persons and refrain from sharing accounts. Authorized users are responsible for the security of their passwords and accounts. Passwords should be changed quarterly. All default passwords must be changed within two (2) business days. Authorized users should take steps to prevent unauthorized access to their accounts by logging off when their terminal will be unattended;
- d. All messages to and from in-house or outside legal counsel seeking or giving advice should be clearly marked, "PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL; ATTORNEY/CLIENT COMMUNICATION". To preserve the attorney-client privilege, never send or forward messages to or from counsel to anyone outside the County, without prior authorization from legal counsel;
- e. Authorized users may use encryption software when sending proprietary or confidential information via external e-mail. Use of encryption software is prohibited except with written authorization from the Director of Technology Services in accordance with the above statement regarding proprietary or confidential information;
- f. Users should be especially sensitive when transmitting confidential data; consider whether other forms of communication are more appropriate;
- g. Users may not access a computer account that belongs to another user;
- h. Users must use their own logon ID and password only, are responsible for all activity on their logon ID and must immediately report any known or suspected compromise of the logon ID or password to the Technology Services Director; and
- i. Users shall not install any program without authorization from Technology Services and may not knowingly or recklessly run or install (or cause another to run or install) a

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program, such as a “worm” or “virus”, intended to damage or place an excessive load on the County’s electronic communication resources.

- j. Before sending an e-mail, ensure that only appropriate recipients have been designated. Make sure the electronic distribution lists are updated as necessary.

512.3.7

Prohibited Uses: Employees are expressly prohibited from certain uses of County electronic communication resources which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. To send, store, view or willingly receive material that is, including but not limited to, fraudulent, harassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate. Users encountering or receiving this type of material must immediately report the incident to their supervisors or Technology Services, except as it may pertain to work or as authorized by law;
- b. To produce, distribute, or store commercial or personal advertisements, employee-owned business materials, solicitation, promotions, political materials, etc.;
- c. Deliberate acts that waste electronic communication resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others, including sending mass mailings or chain letters, subscribing to non-business-related list servers and mailing lists, spending unnecessary time on the Internet, engaging in online “chat groups”, or otherwise causing network traffic unrelated to legitimate County business;
- d. To copy software for use on personal computer. Provide copies of software to any independent contractors or clients of Grant County or to any third party;
- e. To install software on any of Grant County’s workstations or servers; this includes downloading any software from the Internet, or other online service, to any of Grant County’s workstations or servers, including screensavers, without the authorization of Technology Services;
- f. To modify, revise, transform, recast, adapt, reverse-engineer, disassemble or decompile any software;
- g. To use “spoofing”, obscuring the origin of any message, using an assumed name, or utilization of any other means to disguise one’s identity or send a message under another individual’s name in any e-mail or other correspondence; and
- h. Any use that violates local, state or federal laws.
- i. Users must immediately report to their supervisors or the Director of Technology Services any violation of the above-prohibited activities.

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- 512.3.8 Netiquette: Users should exercise the same care in crafting e-mails and other electronic documents as they would for any other written communication. The quality of an employee's writing will reflect either positively or negatively on Grant County. The following criteria are should always be applied:
- a. Write down only what you mean and communicate it directly; do not use double meanings, innuendo, sarcasm, nicknames, or slang. E-mail may appear "informal" when it is composed, but not when it is read.
  - b. Users should ensure that each of their electronic communications is truthful and accurate.
  - c. Always strive to use proper grammar and correct punctuation.
  - d. Whenever there is confusion regarding the material, which cannot be clarified within two electronic messages, use another form of communication such as the telephone.
  - e. Statements about co-workers, providers, and the people we serve, etc. that is degrading is prohibited.