

City of Van

COMPUTER/INTERNET/SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

I. PURPOSE

To define the parameters within which the City computers and computer systems may be used; establish rules for the protection and security of the City's information technology equipment, systems and data; and define the expectations of the City as to employee's use of Social Media. This Policy applies to all City employees.

II. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is the City's policy to maintain and monitor all Cities owned, operated, and leased computer systems, computer hardware, software, Internet access, and Intranet access.

1. All users of the City's computer network, including for Internet access, are responsible for complying with all Local, State, and Federal laws.
2. Anyone wishing to access the network and computer system on the City network must receive a User ID from the management Information Systems Contractor. This User ID is to be used only by the person assigned to the User ID and no one else. Do not divulge your password to anyone else other than the I.T. Contractor unless directed by City management to do so. Anyone other than authorized personnel requesting your password should be reported to City management promptly. Non-employees are expressly forbidden from using any City terminal/P.C./laptop without proper authorization from City management.
3. Any unauthorized use by any person using a User ID is strictly prohibited and subject to disciplinary action. Do not allow anyone else to use your ID or password unless specifically directed to do so by City management of the I.T. Contractor.
4. If a user creates any liability on behalf of the City, due to inappropriate use of the network, the employee agrees to indemnify and hold the City harmless, should it be necessary for the City to defend itself against such actions engaged in by the user.
5. Deletion, examination, copying or modification files and /or data belonging to other users without their prior consent is prohibited.
6. Once a user is advised to cease certain activities, they must stop those activities at once.
7. The use of all computer hardware, software, and network by City employees on City owned or leased equipment is to be for City business only.

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8. It is a violation of this policy to engage in an unauthorized, deliberate action that damages or disrupts the computer system, alters its normal performance, or causes it to malfunction.
9. No software may be installed on any City owned or leased computer without prior written approval by the I.T. Contractor and the Mayor and City Council and without being registered to the City of Van.
10. Employees and visitors should maintain a "care zone" around City computer equipment, so that food and drink cannot fall directly in or onto the equipment. This includes equipment located in City offices and off-site, such as laptops assigned for office or vehicle use.
11. The security of the hardware/equipment is the responsibility of the department using that hardware/equipment. This includes protection against unauthorized use, theft, and accidental damage.
12. The security of the software and data is the responsibility of any department that uses and/or maintains it.
13. When using the City system or data, employees should report anything unusual to the City Hall: this would include unexplained errors when writing to a hard disk drive or network file server.
14. Missing files, stolen or lost equipment or cellular phones and any potential hazards or liabilities should be reported to City Hall immediately.
15. Computer equipment should be used only for its designated purpose. Improper care of computer equipment can lead to injury, electrical damage to equipment, or loss of data due to particulate contamination of data storage devices.
16. To clean a computer, use commercially bottled or compressed air or a moist, lint-free rag. Do not spray water or any cleaning fluid on the keyboard, monitor or printer.
17. If any piece of electrical equipment gets wet from spill or flood, turn off the circuit breaker, then unplug the machine. Notify your department head. Do not turn the equipment on to see if it works.
18. If there is a power outage or blackout, unplug your computer and printers.
19. Employees may be held responsible for the repair or replacement of assigned equipment if it is damaged, stolen, or lost.

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20. No unauthorized person should be permitted to access the City computer or communications system.
21. At a minimum, users should log off at the end of every work day/shift and turn off the computer. In cases where critical or sensitive data is accessible from the computer, supervisors may require more frequent log off, such as when the employee leaves the computer unattended.
22. Users are responsible for ensuring that all user files are backed up. All files saved on the network will automatically be backed up by City Hall every night. Any files not backed up on the server are the direct responsibility of the user.
23. City Hall installs a virus protection software package on all desktop computers. Users should leave this virus protection software enabled at all times. Virus protection software will detect viruses, but will not automatically eliminate them. The user has to do that, following prompts from the virus protection software.
24. Passwords are necessary to protect the security of our information and computer systems. Passwords are the property of the City of Van. Passwords do not belong to the user and the use of passwords does not guarantee confidentiality.
25. Passwords must have a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of ten (10) characters, preferably including at least one number and be difficult to guess.
26. Games are prohibited on all City-owned computers. Games may not be loaded-either from software or from the Internet.
27. Any use of licensed software must not violate the City's license for that software. No modifications to software may be made except by the I.T. Contractor, and then only after consultation with the City and the licensor.
28. Downloading or streaming of MP3 and other music, files, video files, TV or radio programs, and browser enhancements is strictly prohibited unless directly associated with your job duties and authorized by City management after being cleared with the I.T. Contractor.
29. The City computer system/computers/internet access/email shall never be used to access, download, receive or transmit pornographic materials of any kind.
30. Violations of any of the above restrictions may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

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A. E-MAIL

1. The electronic mail system is provided by the City to assist in the conduct of the business of the City.
2. The electronic mail system hardware is City property. All messages composed, sent or received on the electronic mail system are and remain the property of the City of Van.
3. No communication may be transmitted via the electronic mail system using any offensive, disruptive, discriminatory or harassing language or other communications. Communications are considered offensive if they contain sexual implications, racial slurs, derogatory or unwelcome gender-specific comments, or other comments that offensively address someone's age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability, or any other protected category.
4. The electronic mail system shall not be used to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, and any other unauthorized materials, without prior authorization.
5. To ensure proper use of the City's e-mail system, The City will monitor employee's e-mail. By this policy, employees are on notice that the City reserves the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the e-mail system for any purpose. The contents of electronic mail may be received and disclosed without the consent of the originator. **Electronic mail messages are public information unless exempt by statute. No expectation of privacy shall exist as to any user of the City's system, and the City may access any e-mails or other information on any City computer or system at any time, and may monitor computer use.**
6. No electronic mail is confidential from review by the City of Van.
7. This policy also applies to instant messaging (IM). The City recognizes that e-mail can be an efficient means of communication, similar to a telephone. Thus, use for non-work-related communications is not prohibited as long as such is not excessive, does not interfere with the employee's work and complies with the policies herein.
8. Chain emails and mass emails shall never be sent from City computers other than for official City business. Storage of an excessive number of emails on your computer is discouraged, as such takes up disk space and causes computer performance problems. Important information relating to City business should be saved to your user directory to ensure that it is saved.

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9. This also applies to instant messaging (IM).
10. Violations of any of the above restrictions will likely result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

B. NETWORK SECURITY

1. The following actions are prohibited:
 - a. Use of systems and/or networks in attempts to gain unauthorized access to remote systems.
 - b. Decryption of system or user passwords.
 - c. The copying of system files.
 - d. The copying of copyrighted materials, such as third-party software, without the express written permission of the owner or the proper license.
 - e. Intentional attempts to "crash" Network systems or programs.
 - f. Any attempts to secure a higher level of privilege on Network systems.
 - g. The willful introduction of computer "viruses" or other disruptive/destructive programs into the City's network is strictly prohibited.
 - h. Any employee bringing in diskettes, CD's, DVD's, or any other media to upload/download files into PC's or networks must first clear such items through the Department Head and I.T. Contractor. Generally these will be prohibited unless part of a work product.
 - i. The City maintains the right to remove diskette drives, CD-ROM drives, or DVD drives at any time.

Violations of any of the above restrictions will likely result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERNET USE

1. Before an employee may access and use the Internet, he/she must request and obtain the approval of the employee's Department Head or designee and the I.T. Contractor through one-on-one orientation for all new/reassigned employees and must agree to an understanding of the Policy. This policy is in addition to any other departmental computer guidelines that might be in place.
2. The Internet may only be used for work related information, research and communication.

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3. The Internet may not be used for personal gain or advancement of individual views, solicitation of non-City business or to disrupt the operation of the City network or the network of other users.
4. It is strictly prohibited to deliberately enter into or attempt to enter into inappropriate sites (described as but not limited to those that contain sexually explicit materials, gambling, games, drugs, violence, lifestyle choices, cults/occults, hate speech, criminal skills, etc.)
5. Development of a web or home page for personal or departmental purposes is not permitted on a City account.
6. Generating, receiving, viewing, storing, transmitting or other use of data material that is abusive, profane or obscene is prohibited.
7. Sending of messages and jokes likely to cause the loss of the recipients' work or systems or any use that could cause congestion of the network and interfere with the work of others is prohibited.
8. Transmission of any materials in violation of applicable copyright laws or patents is prohibited.
9. Illegal, fraudulent, malicious activity or any activity on behalf of organizations or individuals having no affiliation with the City is prohibited.

Violations of any of the above provisions may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

D. COMMUNICATIONS VIA COMPUTER

Whenever a computer is used for communicating, the following guidelines must be followed.

- a. An employee is responsible for any and all communications he or she sends through the Internet.
- b. Messages on the Internet must have the employee's name attached. No messages shall be transmitted anonymously or under an assumed name.
- c. Users may not attempt to obscure the origin of any messages.
- d. No abusive, profane, offensive, discriminatory, or harassing communications shall be transmitted on the Internet or any system within the City. In order to prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the City's computer system, no one shall download any software without the authorization from I.T. Contractor. Downloads shall be done only through or under the scrutiny of I.T. Contractor.

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- e. Downloads of music, whether to the PC, or onto any media associated with City's equipment are strictly prohibited City wide and subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.
- f. Employees using the Internet shall not transmit any copyrighted materials belonging to entities other than the City of Van unless prior authorization of the originator has been obtained.
- g. Users are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add or delete information or programs belonging to other users unless given express permission to do so by the owner.
- h. Users are not permitted to invoke an attached executable (*.exe) file on an e-mail received from anyone, whether known or unknown to the recipient, at any time without specific approval of their respective Department Head or the I.T. Contractor or designee.
- i. Electronic media/computers may not be used for any illegal purposes or in any way that violates City policy or is contrary to the City's best interests.
- j. Confidential or sensitive information of the City or information known only by virtue of an employee's position with the City may not be communicated from City computers/systems for other than authorized City business.
- k. Violations of any of the aforementioned guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

E. SECURITY

1. The City of Van will monitor all messages and files on the computer system as deemed necessary and appropriate. All messages created, sent or received over the Internet or any other computer system including but not limited to electronic mail, instant messaging (IM), software and the like are the property of the City of Van; employees are not entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to such information.
2. If necessary the City of Van will advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal activity by an employee through use of the City's computer system.

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E. SOCIAL NETWORKING

While the City of Van encourages its employees to enjoy and make good use of their off-duty time, certain activities on the part of employees may become a problem if they have the effect of impairing the work of any employee; harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile working environment for any employee; disrupting the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City's operations; or harming the goodwill and reputation of the City of Van among its customers, with other agencies, or in the community at large. In the area of social media (print, broadcast, digital, and online), employees may use such media in any way they choose as long as such use does not produce the adverse consequences noted above.

1. Social networking, blogging or similar activities are not to be conducted from City computers or on the City's system. Although the City does not presume to control your off-duty computer-related activities, the City expects that you will use good judgments and discretion in such pursuits. For example, postings, blogs, etc. that:
 - a. have the potential or effect of involving the employee, their co-workers, or the City of Van in any kind of dispute or conflict with other employees or third parties;
 - b. interfere with the work of any employee;
 - c. create a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any employee;
 - d. disrupt the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City, or the delivery of services to the City's customers;
 - e. harm the goodwill and reputation of the City of Van among its customers, with other agencies or in the community at large;
 - f. is insubordinate towards superiors; or
 - g. reveals any proprietary information of the City of Van

Do not meet the City's expectations of employee conduct. In addition, workplace issues should be reported to the Mayor, not learned by the City for the first time from an employee's postings, blogs, or emails to third parties.

2. Should an employee decide to create a personal blog, be sure to provide a clear disclaimer that the views expressed in the blog are the author's alone, and do not represent the views of the City of Van.
3. All information published on any employee blog(s) should comply with the City of VAN confidentiality, disclosure and open records request proprietary data

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policies. This also applies to comments posted on other social networking sites, blogs and forums.

4. Be respectful to the City of Van, co-workers, customers, and public agencies that the City works with, and be mindful of physical safety and identify thier concerns when posting personal information about yourself or others on any forum. Describing intimate details of your personal and social life, or providing information about your detailed activities might be interpreted as an invitation for further communication - - - or even stalking and harassment that could prove dangerous to your safety.
5. Your online presence reflects on the City of Van. Be aware that your comments, posts, or actions captured via digital or film images can affect the image of the City of Van.
6. Remember some information of the City is not only confidential by City policy, it is confidential by law.
7. Do not ignore copyright laws, and cite or reference sources accurately. Remember that the prohibition against plagiarism applies online.
8. Some disclosures could put public safety at risk. Information regarding planned or ongoing law enforcement operations or investigations, law enforcement work schedules, and home addresses and telephone numbers of law enforcement officers shall not be circulated.
9. If an internal investigation is being undertaken by the City, information that would compromise or interfere with that investigation shall not be circulated.
10. Do not use any City of Van logos or trademarks without written consent. The absence of explicit reference to a particular site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. If no policy or guideline exists, the City of Van employees should use their professional judgment and follow the most prudent course of action. If you are uncertain, consult your supervisor or manager before proceeding.