

Acceptable Internet Usage Policy

Alamance County provides access to the Internet to assist employees in the performance of their duties. The facilities to provide this access represent a considerable commitment of County resources for telecommunications, networking, software, storage, support and computer systems. This policy is designed to help you understand our expectations for the use of these resources.

Philosophy

First and foremost, all employees have the responsibility to use these resources in a professional, ethical and lawful manner. Internet resources are a business tool provided to you at significant cost. All employees are expected to use Internet resources for business related purposes. This may include communicating with other counties, municipalities, state, and federal agencies, researching relevant business issues and topics, and obtaining useful business information. All employees must respect copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy and the prerogatives of others, similar to other business transactions. All existing County policies apply to conduct on the Internet, including, but not limited to, those involving intellectual property protection and software piracy, privacy, misuse of County resources, harassment, information and data security, and confidentiality.

All employees granted Internet access using County resources will receive a written copy of this policy. All Internet users must sign to acknowledge the following statement:

"I have received a written copy of Alamance County's Acceptable Internet Usage Policy. I fully understand the terms of this policy and agree to abide by them. I understand the County's security software may record for management use the Internet address of any site that I visit and keep a record of any network activity in which I transmit or receive any kind of file. I acknowledge that any message I send or receive may be recorded and stored in an archive file for management use. I understand that any violation of this policy could lead to disciplinary action up to and including revocation of Internet privileges, dismissal, or criminal prosecution."

Employee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Employee Name: _____
(Please Print)

"I have received a written copy of Alamance County's Internet Acceptable Usage Policy. This individual has a legitimate need to access the Internet to allow them to more effectively execute their job with Alamance County. I am aware of the dangers and responsibilities of Internet access, and understand that this individual will be held responsible for any inappropriate use of these resources.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Definitions

Certain terms in this policy should be understood expansively to include related concepts.

1. **County** - Alamance County government and all of its departments and branches.
2. **Document** - any kind of file that can be read on a computer screen as if it were a printed page, including HTML files displayed in an Internet browser, any file designed to be accessed by a word processing or desktop publishing program or its viewer, or the files prepared for the Adobe Acrobat reader and other electronic publishing tools.
3. **Graphics** - photographs, pictures, animations, movies, or drawings.
4. **Display** - monitors, flat-panel active or passive matrix displays, monochrome LCD's, projectors, televisions and virtual-reality tools.
5. **WAN** - a Wide Area Network, including any data circuits, hardware, and component software that allows the WAN to function. It is through the WAN that Internet access is available.

Management and Administration

- 1) The County will limit Internet access to those employees who demonstrate a legitimate business need. Legitimate business need will be determined in a joint effort of MIS and the individual department heads.
- 2) The County has software and systems in place that can monitor and record all Internet usage. Users are advised that the County's security systems are capable of recording (for each and every user) each World Wide Web site visit, each chat, newsgroup or email message, and each file transfer into and out of the County network. The County reserves the right to do so at any time. No employee shall have any expectation of privacy as to his or her Internet usage. County Information Technology employees and or employee's supervisors may review Internet activity and analyze usage patterns. This information may be publicized to assure that County Internet resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of productivity. MIS will conduct periodic audits of Internet usage patterns in an effort to monitor compliance with this written policy.
- 3) The County reserves the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of the network in order to assure compliance with policy.
- 4) Sending, receiving, displaying, printing or otherwise disseminating material that is fraudulent, harassing, illegal, embarrassing, sexually explicit, obscene, intimidating, or defamatory is prohibited.
- 5) The display of any sexually explicit image or document on any County system is a violation of the County's policy on sexual harassment. In addition, sexually explicit material may not be archived, stored, distributed, edited or recorded using the County network or computing resources.
- 6) The County uses independently supplied software and data to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. The County may block access from within the network to all such sites that are so identified. If a user is inadvertently connected to a site that contains sexually explicit or offensive material, the user must disconnect

from that site immediately, regardless of whether that site had been previously deemed acceptable by any screening or rating program.

- 7) The County's Internet resources and computing resources must not be used knowingly to violate the laws and regulations of the United States or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, city, province or other local jurisdiction in any material way. Use of any County resources for illegal activity is grounds for immediate dismissal. The County will cooperate with any legitimate law enforcement activity or investigation that may involve County Internet resources.
- 8) Any software or files downloaded via the Internet into the County network become the property of the County. Any such files or software may be used only in ways that are consistent with their licenses or copyrights.
- 9) No employee may use County facilities knowingly to download or distribute pirated software or data.
- 10) No employee may use the County's Internet resources to deliberately propagate any malicious or destructive code or device, including but not limited to viruses, worms, Trojan horses, or trap-door program code.
- 11) No employee may use the County's Internet resources knowingly to disable or overload any computer system or network, or to circumvent any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user.
- 12) Each employee using the County's Internet resources shall identify himself or herself honestly, accurately and completely when participating in chats or newsgroups, or when setting up accounts on external computer systems.
- 13) Only those employees or officials who are duly authorized to speak to the media, to analysts or in public gatherings on behalf of the County may speak or write in the name of the County to any newsgroup or chat room. Other employees should exercise the same care in drafting e-mail, communicating in chat rooms, and posting items to news groups as they would for any other written or verbal communication. Anything created on the computer or Internet may, and likely will, be reviewed by others..
- 14) Employees are reminded that chats and newsgroups are public forums where it is inappropriate to reveal confidential County information. Employees releasing confidential information via a newsgroup or chat - whether or not the release is inadvertent - will be subject to all penalties under existing data security policies and procedures.
- 15) Use of County Internet resources to commit infractions such as misuse of County assets or resources, sexual harassment, unauthorized public speaking and misappropriation or theft of intellectual property are also prohibited by general County policy, and will be sanctioned under the relevant provisions of the Personnel Ordinance.
- 16) Employees may not use County Internet resources for commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, promotions, destructive programs, political material, or any other unauthorized or personal use.
- 17) Since a wide variety of materials may be deemed offensive by colleagues, customers or suppliers, it is a violation of County policy to store, view print or redistribute any document or graphic file that is not directly related to the user's job or the County's business activities.

- 18) In the interest of keeping the County well informed, use of news briefing services like Pointcast may be acceptable for some users. These products utilizing Push and Pull technologies can seriously impact on the performance of the network and Internet connection, so these services will be allowed on a case by case basis. In order to be legitimately allowed to run these types of technologies, the subject matter of that technology must be shown to have a legitimate application to the functions of the department. The Department head will make initial determination, and MIS will have the opportunity to offer alternative access methods.
- 19) Employees may use their County Internet resources for non-business research or browsing outside of work hours, with consent from the appropriate Department Head, provided that all other State, County, and Departmental employee and Internet usage policies are adhered to. Sites that are deemed potentially offensive during business hours are still to be considered potentially offensive outside of work hours, and are therefore not allowed.
- 20) The County will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries and archives regarding any individual's Internet activities.
- 21) Employees with Internet access must take particular care to understand the copyright, trademark, libel, slander and public speech control laws of all countries in which the County maintains a business presence, so that use of the Internet does not inadvertently violate any laws that might be enforceable against us.
- 22) Employees with Internet access may download only software with direct business use and must arrange to have such software properly licensed and registered. Downloaded software must be used only under the terms of its license. A representative from Alamance County MIS must be consulted on the installation of that software.
- 23) Employees with Internet access may not upload any software licensed to the company or data owned or licensed by the company without explicit authorization from the manager responsible for the software or data.

Technical

- 1) User IDs and passwords help maintain individual accountability for Internet resource usage. Any employee who obtains a password or ID for an Internet resource must keep that password confidential. Individuals must recognize that if one of the participants in a shared User ID or password arrangement commits an illegal or unacceptable act, all users with the shared User ID and password may be implicated. For this reason, shared User ID's and passwords are highly discouraged.
- 2) Employees should schedule communications-intensive operations such as large file transfers, video downloads, mass e-mailings and similar activities during off-peak times.
- 3) Any material that is downloaded from the Internet must be scanned for viruses and other destructive programs before it is run or accessed. Therefore, any PC being used to access the Internet will be required to have an up to date and active Anti-Virus program installed.

- 4) Video and audio streaming technologies and downloads represent significant traffic, which can cause local network congestion. Video and audio downloading should be scheduled for off-peak times where feasible.
- 5) Information about off-peak hours can be obtained, when available, from MIS department.

Security

- 1) The County has designed Internet access in such a way as to try to assure the safety and security of the County's networks. Any employee who attempts to disable, defeat or circumvent any County security facility may be subject to immediate dismissal.
- 2) Files containing sensitive County data, as defined by existing State, County, or departmental data security policy, that are transferred in any way across the Internet must be encrypted or password protected.
- 3) Employees may only access the Internet through an approved Internet firewall. Accessing the Internet directly, by modem, is strictly prohibited unless the accessing computer is not connected to the County's network. The use of a direct modem connection to other external computers or networks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 4) Services such as FTP and JAVA can potentially be used by outside influences to damage a computer or compromise sensitive data. Since these can happen without the users consent or knowledge, we reserve the right to disable FTP, JAVA, or any other Internet protocol or tool that is not absolutely critical to the operation of the Internet browser.
- 5) Because of export restrictions, programs or files containing encryption technology are not to be placed on the Internet or transmitted in any way outside the United States.