

Corporate Policies and Procedures			
DEPARTMENT: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			POLICY #: IT-02
POLICY: Proper Use of E-Mail and Internet Access			
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POLICY STATEMENT:

The County of Renfrew establishes rules and procedures to ensure the appropriate use of its electronic mail system and Internet access.

PROCEDURE:

1. E-mail and Internet access are tools for business and administrative communication and are not intended for personal or non-business purposes.
2. Messages that are created, sent, or received using the County's e-mail system as well as any items or programs downloaded from the Internet are the property of the County. E-mail messages may be backed up or recorded and stored centrally.
3. The County advises anyone who utilizes corporate computers for personal use that any form of personal communication on corporate systems may be accessed, retained, or deleted by the County without notice.
4. Employees may not send or forward religious, political, or commercial messages; chain letters, promotional messages for personal gain, messages for employee solicitation, or messages that are forged.
5. Employees may not send or forward messages that contain:
 - (a) intimidating, harassing, or offensive material i.e. threatening, disruptive, obscene or profane language or images; and
 - (b) language or images that may offend on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offenses, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, family status, or handicap.
6. Employees may not intentionally or knowingly visit web sites that have offensive content i.e. obscene, profane, or harassing language or images and/or language or images that may offend on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, age, record of offenses, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, family status, or handicap.

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7. Employees may not initiate any action that impedes communications or risks a negative impact (i.e. virus vulnerability, bandwidth consumption) on the County's network infrastructure, i.e. instant messaging, music/screen saver download programs, large e-mail attachments or downloads without prior authorization from IT.

On County of Renfrew networked computers (including laptops), only County of Renfrew Exchange e-mail is permitted to be accessed. Accessing any e-mail system other than the County of Renfrew Exchange e-mail system (i.e. hotmail, yahoo mail, etc.) on such networked computers is considered to be a violation of this policy. On County of Renfrew mobile devices such as smart phones (i.e. Blackberry) or tablets (i.e. iPads), County of Renfrew Exchange e-mail plus other e-mail systems such as hotmail, yahoo, etc. is permitted.

8. The County manages, consistent with available technology, the privacy and security of electronic data or transmission, and all employees are advised as follows:
- (a) the County reserves the right to access and disclose the contents of all messages created, sent, or received using its e-mail system without notification to its users; the IT Division may be required, where approved, to monitor e-mail/ Internet access and/or redirect e-mail or Internet documentation for propriety, legal ramifications, or investigation of reported violations; and
 - (b) proxy access to electronic mailboxes should be limited and authorized by the Department Head; the individual providing proxy access is responsible for all information released.
9. E-mail and the Internet are the preferred media of communication rather than fax and voice calls when appropriate.
10. Handle e-mail communication in the same professional and confidential manner as letters, faxes, memos, or other forms of business communication. Employees may inadvertently receive e-mail sent in error and meant for another recipient; advise the sender immediately so that the e-mail can be re-sent, and delete the improperly sent item, thereby preserving another's privacy and security.
11. Employees are encouraged to read their e-mail frequently and respond within an appropriate time frame. (Typically within one (1) working day.)

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12. Users are responsible for the proper storage of their e-mail messages.
13. Messages exceeding mailbox capacity will be deleted.

14. Compliance with Canada Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)

All E-mails originating from the County of Renfrew must be CASL compliant. It is the responsibility of the person sending an electronic message to ensure that it complies with the CASL. Failure to do so could result in the sender and the County incurring significant financial penalties. Therefore the County will treat all violations of the CASL, including CEMs sent inadvertently, as serious misconduct.

To maintain CASL compliance, whenever possible links to County services or websites contained in E-mails should lead only to specific pages that do not offer goods or services for sale. This is because messages which seek to sell goods or services, or which contain links to internet pages that offer goods or services for sale, are defined by CASL to be Commercial Electronic Messages (CEMs), and CEMs can only be sent to the E-mail addresses of those who have already consented to receive CEMs.

Therefore, in the event that an employee is sending an E-mail which contains a CEM or is uncertain whether a message constitutes a CEM, they are expected to consult with their Department Head or designate prior to sending it. Should it be confirmed that the intended E-mail does constitute a CEM, then the sender must verify that the intended recipient(s) have consented to receive CEMs. If the intended recipient(s) have not consented to receive CEMs from the County, then the CEM message shall not be sent until proof of consent has been obtained. All CEM messages must contain an unsubscribe mechanism to allow the recipient to opt-out of receiving future CEM messages.

Some examples of CEMs include:

- offers to purchase, sell, barter or lease a product, goods, a service, land or an interest or right in land;
- offers to provide a business, investment or gaming opportunity;
- promoting a person, including the public image of a person, as being a person who does anything referred to above, or who intends to do so.

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When determining whether the purpose of an electronic message is to encourage participation in commercial activity, some parts of the message to look at are:

- the content of the message
- any hyperlinks in the message to website content or a database, and
- contact information in the message.

The inclusion of a logo, a hyperlink or contact information in an e-mail signature does not necessarily make an e-mail a CEM but a tagline in a message that promotes a product or service that encourages the recipient to purchase that product or service would make the message a CEM.

15. Report violations of this policy immediately to the appropriate Department Head; the County makes every effort to maintain confidentiality within the limits of its obligations.
16. When serious violations of this policy are confirmed, access will be restricted and/or appropriate action will be taken in compliance with Corporate Policy H-02 - Discipline and Dismissal.