

## **COMPUTER, EMAIL AND INTERNET USE POLICY**

The City of Merriam makes a variety of information system resources available to employees to assist them in performing their job functions, enhance efficiency and serve the public interest. These resources include computers, printers, application software, data files, email, access to the Internet, etc. These resources are property of the City of Merriam and are to be used for valid business functions. Limited personal use of these resources is acceptable within guidelines established in this and other City policies, e.g. the employee conduct policy and sexual harassment policy. However, any use of City of Merriam information system resources that interferes with the employee's job duties, official City business, or that is intended for personal monetary gain, is prohibited.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **A. COMPUTER DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS**

All data such as email messages, document files, spreadsheets and databases created, maintained, sent and received using City information system equipment and software are the property of the City.

Computer records are not considered private or confidential, and may be subject to public disclosure under the Kansas Open Records Act. Although the City does not routinely monitor employees' computer records, management reserves the right to retrieve the contents for business reasons, such as to find lost messages, to comply with investigations of wrongful acts, or to recover from system failure. The City will also disclose computer records in response to legal requests and obligations to third parties.

The City Administrator shall authorize the review of employees' computer records. Unauthorized monitoring or reading of the City's computer records or their contents violates this City policy.

### **B. COMPUTER USE**

In support of the City's mission and to assist employees with the performance of their duties, the City provides computers to City employees. Computers should be used according to the following guidelines:

1. Employees should not install any software or hardware, including screen savers and shareware, without prior approval of the Computer

Information Systems Administrator. Approval will only be granted if the software or hardware is job related. Unauthorized software may be uninstalled without notice.

2. Computer game software may not be used during working hours or during scheduled breaks. Employees who work 24 hour shifts are allowed to use computer game software during “stand down” time.
3. Computer passwords should be periodically changed to ensure security. Employees should refrain from sharing their network password with anyone else.
4. Data files obtained from sources outside the City organization should be scanned for viruses prior to using them on City computer equipment.

### **C. INTERNET USE**

Use of the Internet for research and communications can improve the quality, productivity and cost effectiveness of the workforce. While accessing the Internet, employees represent the City of Merriam and should conduct themselves appropriately. The following guidelines are provided to ensure the proper use of the Internet:

1. Employees should use the Internet to gather and exchange information that is job related or critical to the City’s mission. Minimal personal use is acceptable within the parameters of this policy. Minimal use is considered to be on an irregular basis for a short period of time during the work period. Personal use of the Internet should not interfere with the performance of the employee’s job duties.
2. Employees should not access a web site or location where a fee is charged without prior approval of the department head. Employees who are responsible for charges that are not approved shall reimburse the City in full.
3. Employees should not upload or download files that are not related to City business. Employees should get prior approval from their department head and the Computer Information Systems Administrator prior to downloading files and files should be scanned for viruses before they are accessed.
4. Employees should not use the Internet to send or solicit material that is indecent, pornographic or offensive in nature, or in violation of the City’s sexual harassment policy, employee conduct policy or other City policies.

5. List servers, newsgroups, and chat rooms are to be subscribed to and used only for legitimate business purposes with the approval of the Computer Information Systems Administrator. Any messages sent or posted may be interpreted as the City's position or policy. The content of any messages should be in keeping with the City's employee conduct policy and appropriate for the workplace.

#### **D. EMAIL**

The City's email system facilitates City business by improving communication between employees and individuals and businesses outside the city. The use of the email system is for City business. Incidental and occasional personal use of the email system is permitted in accordance with the provisions of this policy, the City's sexual harassment policy, employee conduct policy and other City policies. The following guidelines are provided to ensure the proper use of the email system:

1. Confidential information, such as personnel or legal decisions, should be communicated using a more secure method such as written memorandum or personal conversation.
2. When using email employees should comply with the provisions of the City's sexual harassment policy, code of conduct and other City policies. Email messages that could be construed as indecent, offensive, harassing or defamatory are prohibited.
3. Email messages should not be used to campaign for or against a candidate for nomination or election to a political office, or any other political activity.
4. Email messages should be considered as any other form of correspondence and may be subject to the Kansas Open Records Act. Therefore, email messages should be able to withstand public scrutiny without embarrassment to the City of Merriam.
5. The employee's department head should approve any email messages intended for citywide distribution. Messages that will be approved for broadcast to groups of employees or citywide include but are not limited to; reminders of City sponsored functions, announcement of birth/adoption of a child, employee recognition announcements and announcement of a death in an employee's family.
6. Employees should not attempt to access another employee's email without authorization.

7. Employees should routinely delete unnecessary or out-of-date email messages. Employees should be aware that deleted messages might not have been deleted from the email system. The message may be residing in the recipient's mailbox or forwarded to other recipients. Furthermore, messages may be stored on the computer's back-up system.

## **Personnel Policy Acknowledgement Form**

As an employee of the City of Merriam, I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
acknowledge that I have read and understand the City's Computer,  
Email and Internet Use policy.

I am aware that violations of this policy may result in disciplinary  
action, up to and including discharge from employment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Signature of Employee]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Date Signed]