

# TOWN OF HERNDON - ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

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Administrative Regulation: 1-38

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Supersedes: January 15, 2000

Approved By: Arthur A. Anselene

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## SUBJECT: Use of Town Electronic Communications Services and Social Media

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### I. Purpose

This administrative regulation establishes policies for the use of Town of Herndon electronic communications systems including the use of social media formats and forums for official town communications.

### II. General Principles

Electronic communication and social media services are provided by the Town of Herndon to support open communications and research through the exchange of information and to provide the opportunity for collaborative government-related work. The Town of Herndon encourages the use of electronic communications by its departments and employees. Although access to information and technology is essential to the mission of the town, use of electronic communications services is a revocable privilege. Conformance with this policy statement is required.

The town's electronic communications systems are the property of the Town of Herndon government and are intended for facilitating town business. The town retains all personal property and intellectual property rights in any matter created, modified, received, or sent via the town's electronic communications systems and such matter is not the property of employees or officers of the town. When using electronic communications services provided by the town, users need to remember that they are representing the town government; should conduct themselves as a town government representative at all times; and undertake the responsibility to safeguard town information and technology assets.

The contents of electronic communication may be disclosed to authorized individuals within the organization without the permission of the sender or recipient. Employees must not assume that messages are confidential because a private password is used. The use of passwords to gain access to the electronic communications systems is for the protection of the town, not the employees. The Town of Herndon government has access to the entire network.

Electronic communications are "public records" under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and are potentially subject to disclosure under this act.

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## III. Policy

This policy applies to all electronic and telephonic communications systems and all communications and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems. These systems are the property of the Town of Herndon, and as such, must be used for job-related functions.

While on the job, or while using publicly owned or publicly provided information-processing resources, employees must use these resources (including telephone, cellular telephone, fax, electronic mail, voice mail, Internet, social media and associated hardware) responsibly and professionally and should make no intentional use of these tools for unlawful purpose.

Town employees may make reasonable personal use of publicly owned or provided resources as long as:

- a. Usage does not adversely affect the performance of the official duties of the employee;
- b. Usage is occasional and of minimal frequency and duration;
- c. Usage does not overburden computing resources or communications systems;
- d. Usage does not degrade the security posture of town systems and does not place any town information assets at risk;
- e. There is no cost to the public or the town above normal operating expenses;
- f. Employees must reimburse the town if costs are incurred; and
- g. No other provision in the policy for acceptable use is violated.

### A. Acceptable Uses of Town Electronic Property

1. To obtain and exchange information to support town missions and operations.
2. To obtain information that enhances the professional skills of town employees.
3. To improve professional or personal skills as part of a formal academic education or professional development program.
4. To apply for or administer grants or contracts for town research or programs.
5. To announce new laws, procedures, policies, rules, services, programs, information, or other town related activities.
6. Limited personal use as defined above.

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### **B. Unacceptable Uses of Town Electronic Property**

1. Purposes which violate the laws of the United States, Commonwealth of Virginia, County of Fairfax or the Town of Herndon.
2. Illegal, fraudulent or malicious activities such as gambling, harassment or illegal drug activities.
3. Political activity and political lobbying.
4. Activities for personal commercial or financial gain. These activities may include chain letters, solicitation of business services, or sale of personal property.
5. Unauthorized fundraising, including solicitation for charitable or other causes.
6. Accessing, storing, processing, displaying or distributing hate literature.
7. Accessing electronic mail from a personal account from a town computer. Using a personal electronic mail address to perform duties related to the town.
8. Obtaining, copying, installing or using software obtained in violation of the appropriate vendors' patent, copyright, trade secret, or license agreement.
9. Developing programs intentionally designated to harass other users or infiltrate a computer, computing system, or communications network or damage or alter the software components of the same.
10. Creating and maintaining departmental or personal Web sites on town electronic communications equipment or departmental Web sites on non-town Web site hosting services.
11. Downloading, uploading, creating, archiving, storing, distributing, or editing any sexually explicit file (to include images and movies) on town computers. The only exception is for legitimate law enforcement investigative activities conducted by law enforcement officials and governed by Herndon Police established operating procedures.
12. Downloading, uploading, storing, or distributing of pirated software on or from town computers.
13. Downloading, uploading, streaming, storing, or distributing music, video, or images for personal use on or from town computers.

### **IV. Use of Social Media**

The town recognizes the influence of social media venues in communicating messages and in shaping public opinion. The following policies ensure that social media outlets using town

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electronic property are used responsibly, appropriately and are used to enhance communication to town citizens and other applicable constituencies:

- a. All social media requests must be approved by the relevant department head and the public information officer to ensure that content adheres to town standards and represents town policies and programs in an appropriate manner.
- b. Departments are responsible for establishing, publishing and maintaining their pages on social networking Web sites. It is the responsibility of departments to ensure that their content is accurate and up-to-date.
- c. When possible, content should always link back to the town Web site ([www.herndon-va.gov](http://www.herndon-va.gov)) for more information. All approved Internet information must be presented to constituents and other customers through the town's Web site address. Any exceptions must be approved by the Town Manager.
- d. When pages on social networking sites are authorized and created, all new URLs and associated passwords must be shared with the relevant department head and the public information officer (PIO).
- e. All avenues to allow user comments on social networking sites, including discussion boards, "walls" and comment sections, must be turned off.
- f. Departments must not allow "wiki" capability on social media sites, even if such sites typically do permit modifications.
- g. Participation by town staff on community blogs or discussion forums is not permitted during work hours without permission by the relevant department head and the PIO. Personal blogging is not permitted during work hours or within the town's technology infrastructure.

Employees who blog outside of work hours and on their own equipment who express an opinion or make a statement regarding the Town of Herndon are advised to provide a disclaimer that the opinions expressed are the individual's opinions and not those of the Town of Herndon.

- h. Creation of avatars that identify creators as town employees is prohibited.
- i. All use of social media must comply with applicable federal, state and town laws, regulations and policies, as well as proper business communications etiquette.

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All Virginia or town rules, regulations, and guidelines, as they presently exist and as they may be amended, on ethical behavior of employees and the appropriate use of town resources apply to the use of all electronic communications including the utilization of social media formats.

### V. Other Requirements

#### A. Account Security

Town network and application accounts are provided to employees to assist in the performance of their job duties.

1. Users must create a password in compliance with Department of Information Technology guidelines pertaining to strength, alphanumeric make-up and change frequency.
2. Every user of town systems must have one's own network account. Users must safeguard their town systems account information and are forbidden from sharing their network account information, including usernames and passwords, with any other individuals, to include supervisors or other town staff. The only exception is when a department has created a social networking site, see Section IV, paragraph D. Usernames and passwords must be committed to memory and never be transcribed electronically or manually.
3. Authorized users must use passwords associated with a town information system only on that system. When setting up an account at a different communications or information system that will be accessed using the town electronic communications network, authorized users must choose a password that is different from ones used on town systems. Authorized users must not use the same password for both local and remote-accessed systems.
4. Logoff (Exiting). Authorized users must make a reasonable attempt to complete the logoff or other termination procedure when finished using a remote system or resource. Authorized users should make every effort to secure their workspace so as not to allow others to gain physical access to town electronic property.
5. If a network security breach is suspected by a town employee, that employee must immediately report the suspected breach to the Department of Information Technology.

#### B. Virus and Spyware Protection

To protect town electronic property from being compromised by virus or spyware applications, town electronic property will, at all times, be protected by industry standard anti-virus and anti-spyware applications. These applications will be selected and installed by the Department of Information Technology on all town computers. The town will also

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scan every inbound electronic message to ensure that its payload does not carry any malicious coding that is harmful to the town's network security.

1. Authorized users must not disable or modify the configuration of town installed anti-virus and anti-spyware applications on any town computer.
2. Authorized users are required to immediately notify the Department of Information Technology help desk when a virus or spyware warning is received.
3. Authorized users may not access their personal electronic mail accounts from town computers.

### C. Peripheral Attachment

Town employees may not introduce personal electronic equipment to the town's network. Employees may not connect personal cameras, cell phones, PDA, MP3 players, USB thumb drives, printers, scanners, or any other peripheral equipment to the town's network without the written consent of the Director of Information Technology.

### D. Infrastructure Attachment

Town employees may not connect to the town's network any infrastructure device, wired or wireless, to include routers, switches and hubs.

### E. Public Access Terminals

Town employees may not allow a town workstation to be used as a public access terminal or kiosk. If a department has such a need, the department head must work with the Director of Information Technology to facilitate service that secures the town's network and adequately secures the public access workstation. Town staff may not allow persons not on staff to use a town personal computer for any reason.

### F. Downloaded Software

Only software from a pre-approved list (maintained by the Department of Information Technology) may be downloaded from Internet Web sites onto Town of Herndon computer equipment. Exceptions to this may be obtained in writing from the Director of Information Technology. Employees requesting an exception must include the business need that is not currently met that the download will correct. The request must be endorsed by the employee's department head and submitted to the Director of Information Technology. All software and data files, in any form, obtained from outside the town systems must be virus checked prior to use. Use of downloaded software must not violate the software copyright provisions. All downloaded software must be registered in accordance with the software provider's registration procedures. No software may be installed on a town computer that will force the computer to participate in a peer-to-peer file sharing network.

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### G. Confidentiality

Users should disclose messages or information only to persons who are authorized to receive such information or otherwise in accordance with the law or legal process. Requests by the public for messages or information will be treated as a request under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and handled through established FOIA procedures. Town users may not transmit any information that is made confidential by law. In the collection and dissemination of such information, employees will comply with the "Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act," section 2.2-3800, and following, Code of Virginia. If authorized users have a business need to do so, they will clearly label such messages as containing confidential information. Authorized users should not leave electronic messages on their screens when they leave their terminals. Authorized users should not leave hard copies of e-mail or other electronic messages at printers.

### H. Town Online Purchasing

Authorized users may not use the town's Internet access to purchase, obtain or offer products or information for town purchases without prior approval through normal Town of Herndon purchasing procedures.

### I. Security Warning

Unencrypted electronic or voice mail sent or received by any employees on external electronic communications systems cannot be expected to be secure.

### J. Monitoring

In the routine course of technology management, town servers maintain logs of activity, to include the Internet sites accessed by users. Town servers also maintain logs reflecting e-mail traffic to include the source and destination of all messages entering and exiting the town network. Monitoring of a specific activity, or an individual's use, may be performed without consent or knowledge of the individual under the following circumstances and only when authorized by request of the affected department head to the Director of Information Technology or the Town Manager:

1. If required by law or legal process.
2. When reasonably necessary to investigate a possible violation of town policy.
3. When a breach of network security is suspected.
4. When there is reasonable suspicion that a user has committed or is committing a crime.

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### **K. Safeguard Sensitive Information**

1. Sensitive information includes personal information on employees, citizens, or customers to include social security numbers, credit card numbers, checking account numbers, confidential tax information, other personal financial information. The town also considers sensitive any information on children to include identification photographs, names, ages, addresses, and telephone numbers. Any record that includes health information on employees, citizens, or customers to include accident reports and worker's compensation claims are to be safeguarded under this administrative regulation.
2. Town employees must never collect, store, or transmit any sensitive information without a legitimate town business purpose. If the business need should arise that necessitates the collection, storage, or transmission of sensitive information, an appropriate system with adequate security and sufficient administrative safeguards must be purchased or developed in cooperation with the Director of Information Technology.
3. Workstations used to collect, store, and transmit sensitive information may only be shared with personnel who are authorized to collect or view that information.
4. Internet access may be restricted or removed from workstations that collect sensitive information.
5. Users with access to sensitive information must never leave their workstation unattended without first logging off or securing with a screensaver password.
6. Sensitive information may not be transferred to local hard drive, floppy disk, compact disk, thumb drive, or any other data transfer device.
7. Sensitive information may not be electronically transmitted outside of the application used to collect and store that information.
8. If a hard copy report containing sensitive information is necessary, every effort must be made to redact the sensitive data. Copies of any report must be inventoried, safeguarded, and destroyed in an industry prescribed manner when no longer in use.

### **VI. Additional Guidelines**

#### **A. Use by Contractors**

Contractors or other non-town staff users may be granted access to town-provided electronic communications services at the discretion of the department head. All parties accessing town systems must have their own account and password. A request for a contractor or non-town staff user account may be made to the Information Technology help desk. Assurance of acceptable use consistent with this regulation by contractors and other



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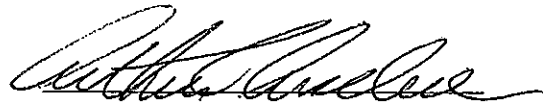
non-town users working for the town is the responsibility of the department head. The department head will provide contractors or other non-town staff users who use town electronic communications services with this administrative regulation.

### B. Compliance

The town may, at its discretion, employ automated tools to compel compliance with this policy.

### VII. Violation of Policy

Department heads will disseminate this regulation, enforce their employees' compliance with this regulation, and investigate non-compliance. Suspension of service to authorized users may occur when necessary to maintain the security and operational integrity of town information and technology assets. User access, passwords, software and hardware may be withdrawn without notice if an authorized user is suspected of violating this regulation. Files stored on town systems in violation of this policy will be deleted when discovered. Violations of this regulation may result in formal disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Criminal or civil action against users may also be appropriate where laws or rights are violated.



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Town Manager