



Electronic Communications / Internet Policy

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Otsego County recognizes that use of the Internet and e-mail is necessary in the workplace, and employees are encouraged to use the Internet and e-mail systems responsibly, as inappropriate use of technology can place Otsego County and others at risk. This policy outlines the guidelines for acceptable use of Otsego County's technology systems.

Scope

This policy must be followed in conjunction with any/all Otsego County policies governing appropriate workplace conduct and behavior. Any employee who abuses the company-provided access to e-mail, the Internet, or other electronic communications or networks, including social media, may be denied future access and, if appropriate, be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Otsego County complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws as they concern the employer/employee relationship, and nothing contained herein should be misconstrued to violate any of the rights or responsibilities contained in such laws.

Questions regarding the appropriate use of Otsego County's electronic communications equipment or systems, including e-mail and the Internet, should be directed to your supervisor or County Administration.

Policy

Otsego County has established the following guidelines for employee use of the company's technology and communications networks, including the Internet and e-mail, in an appropriate, ethical and professional manner.

Confidentiality and Monitoring

All technology provided by Otsego County, including computer systems, communication networks, company-related work records and other information stored electronically, is the property of Otsego and not the employee. Use of the company's technology systems and electronic communications should be job-related and not for personal convenience. Otsego County reserves the right to examine, monitor, audit, intercept, access and disclose e-mail and other electronic communications, directories, files and all other content, including Internet use, transmitted by or stored in its technology systems, whether onsite or offsite with or without notice to an employee. Access by the employer may occur at any time during or after work hours.

An employee's use of a password or code will not restrict the right to access electronic communications by the County.

All employees are notified that any communication or information placed in the County's system is not private and is subject to interception and/or receipt by any other employee of the County and the County's administration. All employees are also notified that any violations of the Electronic Communications Policy of the County may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment. Further, in the event of a violation of this policy by any employee, access to either E-mail or the Internet may be restricted by Administration.

Internal and external e-mail, voice mail, text messages and other electronic communications are considered business records and may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and/or discovery in the event of litigation. Employees must be aware of this possibility when communicating electronically within and outside the company.

Appropriate Use

Otsego County employees are expected to use technology responsibly and productively as necessary for their jobs. Internet access and e-mail use is for job-related activities. Employees may not use Otsego County's Internet, e-mail or other electronic communications to transmit, retrieve or store any communications or other content of a defamatory, discriminatory, harassing or pornographic nature. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual preference may be transmitted. Harassment of any kind is prohibited.

Disparaging, abusive, profane or offensive language and any illegal activities—including piracy, cracking, extortion, blackmail, copyright infringement and unauthorized access to any computers on the Internet or e-mail—are forbidden.

Employees are prohibited from downloading software or other program files or online services from the Internet without prior approval from the IT department. All files or software opened including those received via email, downloaded from websites, or brought to the network via portable media (e.g. CD, Thumb drives, portable hard drives) should be through checked with the County's virus-protection programs prior to use. Even if the virus-protection reports a file as clean, caution should always be exercised with any file you did not expect to receive. Failure to detect viruses could result in corruption or damage to files or unauthorized entry into company systems and networks. Employees should only open emails from sources that they have verified. Opening emails with attachments from unknown and rogue sources puts the County's electronic systems at risk and will not be tolerated.

Every employee of Otsego County is responsible for the content of all text, audio, video or image files that he or she places or sends over the company's Internet and e-mail systems. No e-mail or other electronic communications may be sent that

hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else. Otsego County's identity is attached to all outgoing e-mail communications, which should reflect the County's values and appropriate workplace language and conduct.

Social Media

Access to social media networks/sites for personal accounts from within Otsego County's IT infrastructure, and during County employee work hours, is strictly prohibited. Such sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. LinkedIn is not covered by this policy.

The County Administrator, or her designee, is responsible for approving and creating rules for any official social media accounts related to the County or its departments.

Training

All employees will be required to complete mandatory training on appropriate use of our electronic systems. Training will take place upon hire and at required time intervals as determined by County Administration.

The County reserves the right to change or amend its Electronic Communications Policy at any time with or without notice.

The following employee, by his/her signature, indicates that the Electronic Communications Policy was read and understood. The employee acknowledges receipt of this notice.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____