

# *Town of Natick*

## **Telecommunication Access and Use Policy**

### **1 Policy:**

- 1.1** The telecommunications and data systems shall not be used for any illegal activity, including but not limited to the transmission of copyrighted or trade secret material, propriety financial information, or similar materials, without prior management authorization in writing. The transmission of obscene, defamatory, or threatening material or the propagation of any type of criminal activity is strictly prohibited.
- 1.2** The Town reserves the right to retrieve, read or otherwise access any electronic communication messages and/or other data stored or transmitted on Town owned equipment for any purpose without limitation including systems maintenance and compliance monitoring. The Town retains the right to obtain records including texts, data, phone, and email records from third party agencies. Employees should not consider voice mail, e-mail messages, or Internet postings to be personal or confidential. Further, the use of passwords for security does not imply confidentiality. All passwords are the property of the Town. Electronic communications are to be considered discoverable with or without notice, notwithstanding any password, including deleted messages. Subject to certain exceptions in the law, electronic communications shall also be considered public records.
- 1.3** Data and messages directed to one or more employees or officials should be treated as confidential by other employees and should be accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any messages or data that are not sent to them unless the intended recipient gives express permission.
- 1.4** The telecommunications and data systems shall not be used to create any offensive or disruptive message or images, including but not limited to any messages or images that contain sexual implications, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or comments regarding physical or mental disabilities. Employees must not use the Internet to access pornographic, sexually oriented, or otherwise offensive or inappropriate websites.

- 1.5** Electronic communications users shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of the Town unless expressly authorized to do so.
- 1.6** Executable programs imported from other sites to Town computers shall not be accessed or used unless the Information Technology (IT) Department has authorized them. Once authorized, they must first be subject to virus detection procedures approved by IT. Private e-mail and website accounts are not permitted on Town computer systems.
- 1.7** Upon request of a Department Head and with approval of the Town Administrator, monitoring of telecommunications and data systems usage can and will be implemented to review employee productivity, or to investigate claims of criminal activity or violations of this policy, as well as any other legitimate business reason as determined by the Town Administrator.
- 1.8** The Town's electronic communications shall not be used for commercial promotion, product endorsement or political lobbying. However, political lobbying or other activities that may be deemed to be political in nature shall be permitted to the extent that such activities are a part of the official responsibilities of an employee, provided that such activities relate to political issues rather than directly relating to specific political candidates.
- 1.9** Telecommunications and data systems used for personal activities such as games, entertainment, and correspondence, must not interfere with productivity and/or department efficiency.
- 1.10** Telecommunications and data systems that incur per-use fees, such as cellular telephones and their radio function, should be used to conduct Town business only. Employees may be asked to reimburse the Town for costs associated with inappropriate or personal use.

## **2** Roles and Responsibilities:

- 2.1** All Natick Municipal employees are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.
- 2.2** Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees are advised of and understand the terms of this policy and for ensuring employees' compliance with this policy.

## **3** Questions:

**3.1** If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Director of Human Resources at 508-647-6471.

**3.2** For more information, please visit the Town of Natick's Human Resources website <http://natickma.gov/250/Human-Resources>

THE TOWN RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AMEND ANY OR ALL PARTS OF THIS POLICY AT ANY TIME.
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Policy approved by Personnel Board and Town Administrator

Policy Effective Date: September 29, 2016