

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA USE POLICY**  
**For Departments under the Authority of the County Administrator**  
**Effective Date May 6, 2003**

**PURPOSE**

To accomplish our public service mission, the County provides tools which may include various forms of electronic media and services, such as, but not limited to, computers and peripherals, laptop computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), handheld organizers, e-mail, telephones, cell phones, pagers, two-way radios, voicemail, fax machines, photocopiers, projection equipment, external electronic bulletin boards, online services, intranet, Internet, and the World Wide Web.

These media and services are County property and their purpose is to facilitate and support County business. It is essential for us to demonstrate proper stewardship of County resources and to maintain a responsible, effective work environment. Each person is responsible for using these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

**LOST OR STOLEN**

"In the event of a lost or stolen PDA, blackberry, lap top computer, tablet type computer, or any other device of this type that has or could have access to County information" the individual responsible for the equipment will IMMEDIATELY contact the Support Center at 727-453-4357 (3-HELP) or E Mail at: [supportctr@pinellascounty.org](mailto:supportctr@pinellascounty.org) so that the unit may be locked. Once locked, multiple failed password attempts will result in all data being wiped clean from the device".

**PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

Small portable devices such as cell phones, PDAs, and pagers are typically assigned to individuals for use away from an established office setting. Other items such as computers, copiers, and projectors are generally intended for use in a specific County facility. Employees may not take the latter type of equipment offsite without proper authorization.

While limited personal use of County equipment is acceptable, excessive or inappropriate personal use of County equipment is prohibited. Where personal use does occur, supervisors must ensure that such use does not interfere with performance of public duties or violate any of the prohibitions specified below. Employees are responsible for promptly notifying and reimbursing the County for direct charges associated with personal use.

In any case, electronic media cannot be used for knowingly transmitting, retrieving, reproducing, or storing any communication that is:

- Discriminatory or harassing;
- Derogatory to any individual or group;
- Obscene, sexually explicit or pornographic;
- Defamatory or threatening;
- For private enterprise or personal gain;
- In violation of any license governing the use of software; or
- Engaged in anything that is illegal or contrary to the County's policy, Personnel Rules, department policies, or public service interests.

## PINELLAS COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S ELECTRONIC MEDIA USE POLICY

Further, unless required as part of their official duties, employees who utilize the County's computer systems may not engage in activities such as:

- Downloading or installing software that is not authorized or registered through the County;
- Downloading software or opening an ".EXE" file from an unknown source, without the System Administrator's permission;
- Monitoring or intercepting files or electronic communications of other employees or third parties;
- Hacking or obtaining access to systems or accounts they are not authorized to use;
- Using other employees' ID's or passwords without expressed permission;
- Breaching, testing, or monitoring computer or network security measures;
- Sending e-mail or other electronic communication that is intended to misrepresent the identity of the sender or veil the true nature of its content;
- Engaging in online chat activities or serial e-mailing and/or messaging techniques that are unrelated to official County business;
- Utilizing internal modems or analog connections for dial-out purposes without written authorization from the department director, system administrator or IT department;
- Using media or services in a manner that is likely to cause network congestion or negatively impact system performance; or
- Violating copyright or license requirements.

### **SYSTEM & EQUIPMENT MONITORING**

The County's computer system and its associated software and Internet access provider belong to the County, and employees have no expectation of privacy regarding items received, transmitted, prepared, or viewed on the County's computer system. The County will audit or monitor computer system activity for illegal or inappropriate use. The auditing and/or monitoring may include, but is not limited to, viewing and recording:

- Access to the system, including successful and failed login attempts, and log outs;
- In-bound and out-bound file transfers;
- Terminal connections to and from external systems;
- Sent and received e-mail messages;
- Web sites visited, including uniform resource locator (URL) of pages retrieved; and
- Date, time, and user associated with each event.

Employees can use encryption software supplied to them by the systems administrator and specifically authorized by management, for purposes of safeguarding sensitive or confidential County information. Employees who use encryption on files stored on a County computer must provide their supervisor with a sealed hard copy record (to be retained in a secure location) of all of the passwords and/or encryption keys necessary to access the files.

In addition to monitoring computer systems, the County routinely monitors other electronic activities directly or indirectly. Such monitoring may include gathering activity logs that contain detailed information such as site, source, destination, time, duration, usage rate, and content. In some public contact positions, electronic communications may be monitored directly. Monitoring is conducted for the purpose of quality control, cost analysis, resource allocation, optimum technical management of information resources, and detecting patterns of use that indicate employees are violating County policies or engaging in illegal activity.

## PINELLAS COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S ELECTRONIC MEDIA USE POLICY

The County reserves the right, at its discretion, to review any employee's electronic files and messages to the extent necessary to ensure electronic media and services are being used in compliance with the law, this policy, and other County policies.

### **RELATED POLICIES & ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

This policy is not intended to supersede any element of the County's official Information Security Policy. In cases where the two policies appear to be in conflict, the Information Security Policy shall take precedence.

Authorizations and reimbursements for all telephone and fax usage are governed by Pinellas County Telephone Administrative Procedures.

### **SAFETY**

When using cell phones or other portable devices while operating a motor vehicle:

- Comply with all applicable laws.
- Pull over at the earliest possible safe opportunity.
- Use of hands-free equipment is encouraged.
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### **VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY**

Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.