



Computer and Internet Use Policy

IT/ MIS Department

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This document covers what are acceptable and unacceptable computer and Internet uses.

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1. **Policy Statement.** Computers and computer-related services are made available to departments and employees of The City of Tifton for business-related purposes. In particular, Internet and electronic mail (email) services are provided to support open communications and exchange of information and the opportunity for collaborative government-related work. While The City of Tifton believes that computers and computer-related services, including Internet and email, are essential tools for its departments and employees, access to such services is a revocable privilege. As such, conformance with acceptable use, as expressed in this Policy, is required. Departments of The City of Tifton are expected to maintain and enforce this Policy.
2. **Relationship to Other Policies.** This Policy supplements any and all City of Tifton policies relating to workplace harassment, discrimination, retaliation, conflicts of interest, discipline and discharge, records retention, and Open Meetings Act compliance.
3. **No Expectation of Privacy.** City of Tifton computers and any data stored in them are the property of The City of Tifton and may be accessed at any time by authorized officials of The City of Tifton. Employees shall not expect privacy in the use of The City of Tifton computers. The City of Tifton may, without notice, monitor Internet usage and/ or email and review computer files to ensure that computers are not being used for impermissible purposes.
4. **Public Records.** Many emails and other electronic files constitute public records for purposes of state record retention laws. As such, whether a given email or electronic file is subject to a retention schedule must be determined by its content rather than its format. As a general rule, any email or other electronic file which is a substitute for a letter, memorandum, notice, report, or other traditional record that would be subject to a particular retention schedule, then it too is subject to the schedule. Conversely, if the email or other electronic file is merely transitory, it need not be retained beyond its useful life (e.g., listserv messages, meeting notices, general staff announcements, invitations to events, etc.) Users of The City of Tifton computers and other computer-related services must also bear in mind that all emails and other electronic files are generally subject to disclosure under the Open Records Act.
5. **Acceptable Uses.** The following constitute acceptable uses of the Internet and email made available to employees by The City of Tifton.
 - 5.1. Communication and information exchange directly related to the user's duties and responsibilities as an employee of The City of Tifton or the mission and function of his/her department.
 - 5.2. Communication and exchange for the user's professional development as an employee of The City of Tifton, to maintain currency of his/her relevant training or education, or to discuss issues related to his/her research, projects, or programs as an employee of The City of Tifton.

- 5.3. Use in applying for or administering grants or contracts for The City of Tifton's research or programs.
 - 5.4. Use for advisory, standards, research, analysis, and professional society activities related to the user's duties and responsibilities as an employee of The City of Tifton.
 - 5.5. Announcements of new City of Tifton regulations, ordinances, procedures, policies, rules, services, programs, information, or activities.
 - 5.6. Any other authorized City of Tifton-related administrative communications not requiring a high level of security.
6. **Specifically Unacceptable Uses.** The following constitute unacceptable uses of the Internet and email made available to employees by The City of Tifton and may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- 6.1. Visiting inappropriate web sites (erotica, hate groups, etc.).
 - 6.2. Unauthorized attempts to access any computer or network.
 - 6.3. Sending or posting threatening or otherwise inappropriate messages.
 - 6.4. Sending or posting racially and/ or sexually harassing messages or images, sending or posting any sexually suggestive or explicit messages, or any other use violative of The City of Tifton policies regarding workplace harassment, discrimination, and/ or retaliation.
 - 6.5. Accessing or copying confidential and/ or proprietary software, program, or other electronic files without permission.
 - 6.6. Sending or posting confidential information without authorization.
 - 6.7. Downloading, uploading, or sending viruses or other malicious files or programs.
 - 6.8. Opening or sending emails or other electronic files that may endanger City of Tifton computers and/ or network.
 - 6.9. Using the Internet and/ or email for any purpose which violates a federal, state, or local law.
 - 6.10. Using the Internet and/ or email for any private business or other for-profit activities unrelated to the user's duties and responsibilities as an employee of The City of Tifton.
 - 6.11. Accessing, downloading, or sending computer games that have no bearing on the user's duties and responsibilities as an employee of The City of Tifton, recognizing that some

games designed to teach, illustrate, train, or simulate agency-related issues may be acceptable.

- 6.12. Accessing, copying, or modifying electronic files stored within The City of Tifton computers outside of the user's duties and responsibilities as an employee of The City of Tifton without authorization.
- 6.13. Disclosing or exchanging passwords or seeking or obtaining passwords of other employees of The City of Tifton or other authorized users of The City of Tifton computers and computer-related services.
- 6.14. Representing oneself as another user, either on The City of Tifton internal network or elsewhere on the Internet, without authorization.
- 6.15. Intentionally developing programs designed to harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/ or damage or alter the software components of same.
- 6.16. Fundraising or public relations activities not specifically related to the user's duties and responsibilities or to The City of Tifton approved activities.
- 6.17. Social Networking: The Internet, blogs, the World Wide Web, social networking sites, and any other medium of electronic communication shall not be used in a manner that is detrimental to the mission and function of The City of Tifton.
 - 6.17.1 Employees of The City of Tifton are prohibited from using government computers for any unauthorized purpose, including participating in social networking sites, such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter, as well as online chat applications like Yahoo, MSN, and AIM.
 - 6.17.2 Employees of The City of Tifton are prohibited from posting or in any other way broadcasting, without prior approval, information on the Internet or other medium of communication, the business of The City of Tifton to include but not limited to:
 - 6.17.2.1 Photographs/images, video, or audio files relating to any activity of The City of Tifton.
 - 6.17.2.2 Photographs/images, video, or audio files which memorialize a government-related action of The City of Tifton.
 - 6.17.2.3 Logos/uniforms/badges or other items that are symbols associated with The City of Tifton.
 - 6.17.2.4 Any other item or material that is identifiable to The City of Tifton

- 6.17.3 Employees of The City of Tifton who utilize social networking sites, blogs, or other mediums of electronic communication in their off-duty time shall maintain an appropriate level of professionalism and appropriate conduct so as not to broadcast in a manner which is detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.
- 6.17.3.1 Employees shall not use references in these social networking sites of other mediums of communication that in any way represent themselves as a employee of The City of Tifton without prior approval. This shall include but not be limited to:
- a. Text that identifies The City of Tifton.
 - b. Photos that depict the logos, patches, badges, or other identifying symbols of The City of Tifton.
 - c. Accounts of events that occur within The City of Tifton.
 - d. Any other material, text, audio, video, photograph, or image that would be identifiable to The City of Tifton.
- 6.17.3.2 Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of Internet communication to post any materials of a sexually graphic nature.
- 6.17.3.3 Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of Internet communication to post any materials that promote violence or weaponry.
- 6.17.3.4 Employees shall not use a social networking site or other medium of communication to post or broadcast any materials that would be detrimental to the mission and function of this agency.
- 6.17.4 Employees of The City of Tifton are prohibited from using their title as well as any reference to The City of Tifton in any correspondence, to include emails, postings, blogs, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, unless the communication is of an official nature and is serving the mission of this agency. This prohibition also includes signature lines in personal email accounts. An employee may seek approval for such use.
- 6.17.5 New employees: All candidates seeking employment with The City of Tifton shall be required to complete an affidavit indicating their participation in any social networking sites. This affidavit shall include the name of the sites. The candidate shall provide The City of Tifton with access to their site as part of any background examination.
- 6.17.6 Administrative Investigations: Employees who are subject to administrative investigations may be ordered to provide the agency with access to the social

networking site when the subject of the investigation is directly, narrowly, and specifically related to the employee's performance or ability to perform his or her function within The City of Tifton or when the subject of the investigation is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the agency.

- 7 **Procedures.** Department heads, or their designees, are responsible for their employees' compliance with the provisions of this Policy and for promptly investigating non-compliance. Suspension of service to users may occur when deemed necessary to maintain the operation and integrity of The City of Tifton network. User accounts and password access may be revoked without notice if a user violates the acceptable use policy. Disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment may be imposed depending on the severity of the violation. Criminal or civil action against users may be initiated when laws are violated.
- 8 **Guidelines.** The following additional guidelines apply to uses of the Internet and email made available to employees by The City of Tifton.
 - 8.1 *Checking for viruses.* Any software obtained from outside The City of Tifton shall be scanned prior to use for viruses and other malicious files or programs.
 - 8.2 *Contractors.* Contractors and other non-City of Tifton users may be granted access to The City of Tifton-provided Internet and/ or email services at the discretion of the department head. Acceptable use by such users is the responsibility of The City of Tifton contract administrator, who is expected to provide such users with this policy.
 - 8.3 *Passwords.* Use passwords associated with The City of Tifton information system only on that system. When setting up an account at a different information system, or online account, that will be accessed using the Internet, choose a password that is different from ones used on The City of Tifton information systems. Do not use the same passwords for both local and remote Internet-accessed systems. If the password used at the remote, Internet-accessed remote site were to be compromised, the different password used locally would still be secure. Passwords should not be so obvious so that others could easily guess them, and passwords should be changed at least every ninety days.
 - 8.4 *Logging Off.* Always make a reasonable attempt to complete the logoff or other termination procedure when finished using a remote, Internet-accessed system or similar resource, or local computer. This will help prevent potential breaches of security.
 - 8.5 *Email Security.* Always remain mindful that unencrypted email sent or received outside any department and on the Internet cannot be expected to be secure.
 - 8.6 *Large File Transfers and Internet Capacity.* The Internet connection is a shared resource. While routine email and file transfer activities generally will not impact other users, large file transfers and intensive multimedia activities will impact the service

levels of other users. Users contemplating file transfers of over ten megabytes per transfer or interactive video activities shall, to be considerate of other users, schedule these activities early or late in the day or, if possible, after business hours.

- 8.7 *Conduct and Etiquette.* Know and follow generally accepted Internet and email etiquette. Refrain from language or other uses of the Internet and email that reflect poorly on The City of Tifton.
- 8.8 *Correspondence with Legal Counsel / Disclaimer.* Any email or other correspondence sent to the City Attorney or other legal counsel for The City of Tifton, if sent for the purpose of assisting legal counsel in providing legal advice to The City of Tifton, must include the following disclaimer:

“This communication and all attachments may contain privileged and confidential legal communications/ attorney work product intended solely for the use of the addressee. If you are not the intended recipient, any reading, distribution, copying or other use of this communication and/ or any attachments hereto is prohibited and you should delete this message from all locations, and advise the sender at [INSERT TELEPHONE NUMBER AND/OR EMAIL ADDRESS]. Thank you.”

9 **Use of Computer Software.**

- 9.1 In compliance with federal copyright laws, The City of Tifton will not participate in or condone the illegal duplication of licensed microcomputer software. Such activity is strictly prohibited on The City of Tifton premises and/ or computers. The City of Tifton does not own the copyright to any software or its related documentation and, unless authorized by the software developer, does not have the right to reproduce it for use on more than one computer.
- 9.2 With regard to use on local area networks or on multiple machines, City of Tifton employees and other authorized users shall use the software only in accordance with the license agreement.
- 9.3 City of Tifton employees are required to promptly report any misuse of software or related documentation within The City of Tifton to their department head or the System Administrator.