Internet Access and Use Policy

OVERVIEW

The Internet can be a very effective resource in gathering information needed to conduct City business; for this reason, the City provides employees with browsing access to it. However, as everyone knows who has ever logged on to it, "surfing the net" can be very addictive and time consuming. It's easy to become absorbed with one link after another, and forget the original *business* reason for accessing the Internet and visiting a Web site.

In short, browsing access to the Internet can either be a major productivity boost or a major time waster, depending on its use. Accordingly, this policy sets guidelines for using City resources in accessing the Internet that retain its value for obtaining information while also assuring its appropriate use in conducting City business.

Using Internet Email. Guidelines for using Internet email are set forth separately in the City's *Electronic Mail Policy*.

PURPOSE OF PROVIDING INTERNET ACCESS

The City's Internet connection exists solely for the purpose of conducting City business, and is not intended for personal use.

Employees who want to have personal Internet email or access should contract for this from any number of non-profit or commercial providers, and use it at home. However, limited and appropriate personal use of the City's Internet connection is allowed, provided that:

- It does not occur during an employee's assigned working hours.

- It is used in accordance with all other guidelines and restrictions set forth in this policy.

USE AND ACCESS GUIDELINES

Use of the City's Internet Connection

Good judgment and common sense should always prevail regarding the appropriate use of the City's Internet connection. Under this standard, it is not possible to list all the allowed and prohibited uses of the City's Internet connection. However, use of the City's Internet connection for any reason *is expressly prohibited* under the following circumstances:

- Compromises the integrity of the City and its business operations in any way.

- Commits any illegal act.

- Violates the City's *Anti-Discrimination and Unlawful Harassment Policy*.

- Results in private gain or advantage for the employee (such as conducting business related to economic interests outside of City employment), or violates the City's *Ethics Policy*.

When possible, Information Technology (IT) will block accesses to sites that fall within the above expressly prohibited categories. Computers that attempt to access sites categorized as security risks 5 or more times in 24 hours will have their Internet access suspended until IT staff can assess the security risk.

Approval to Use the City's Internet Connection

- *General Approval.* Council members, Council appointed officials, department heads and all regular City staff are authorized to use the City's Internet connection. Department heads are responsible for providing employees who have Internet access with a copy of this policy.

- *Case-by-Case Approval.* Department head approval is required for all other users. Department heads should submit written requests to IT that concisely discuss why the temporary employee, contractor, or volunteer needs Internet access. Department heads are responsible for providing users who have Internet access with a copy of this policy. IT will periodically provide the City Manager with a listing of users with Internet access.

- *Shared Access Computers and User Accounts.* Computers that do not require a user login and shared user accounts will have only limited access to the City's Internet connection as determined by IT working with the department .

Unrestricted Use of the City's Internet Connection

Unrestricted use of the City's Internet connection is only provided for employees authorized by their Department head and will be to all sites except those categorized as security risks. Access to security risk sites must be coordinated with IT.

Approval for Unrestricted Access to the City's Internet Connection

- *General Approval.* IT staff are authorized to have unrestricted access to the City's Internet connection for the purpose of carrying out IT duties.

- *Case-by-Case Approval.* Department head approval is required for all other employees that require unrestricted Internet access. Department heads should submit written requests to IT that concisely discuss why the employee needs unrestricted Internet access. IT will periodically provide the City Manager with a listing of employees with unrestricted Internet access.

Monitoring Internet Use

The City will prepare monthly summary reports on Internet activity, which will be provided to Department Heads and City Administration for their review. More detailed ad hoc reports on Internet use for each user are available to department heads upon request.

Under the State's public records disclosure laws, these reports may be subject to public disclosure.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

■ *General*. Each employee with access to the City's Internet connection is responsible for understanding and following these guidelines. Unauthorized or improper use of the City's Internet connection may result in terminating access to it; and depending on the severity of the outcome of unauthorized or improper use, may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

■ *Connection Security and Passwords*. Each employee has a uniquely assigned user name and password for security purposes. While this cannot guarantee privacy, confidentiality or data security, it is an important component of the City's overall system protection. Employees should never share passwords with others. This is especially important since employees are responsible for all Internet use conducted under their user name.

SUMMARY

The use of the Internet is an important research tool for our organization. It helps us do our work in an effective, efficient manner. However, the Internet can easily be used inappropriately. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that common sense and organizational purpose are embodied in our Internet use.

- *Approved by the City Manager on May 7, 1998*
- *Updated by Information Technology on January 15, 2002*
- *Amended by the City Manager on July 23, 2009*
- *Revised by the City Manager on January 20, 2010*