

Town of Thomaston

Policy Title: *Employee Use of Thomaston Information Technology Resources*

Purpose.

The purpose of this issuance is to establish the policy for employee use of Information Technology (IT) resources in the Town of Thomaston. This policy applies to all Thomaston IT resources regardless of location (i.e. office, home, field locations, etc.).

Notice Regarding Use.

Employees are permitted limited use of e-mail, Intranet, Internet and other technology resources for occasional brief personal needs if the use is incidental, involves no additional expense to the Town, is performed on the employee's personal time, does not hinder or interfere with the mission, productivity, or operations of the Town, and does not violate federal or state laws or the following provisions of the policy.

Employees may be allowed by their respective supervisor/department head to use of these resources for self-development during duty hours, insofar as such use is job related, promotes professional development, promotes productivity, and or is related to or reinforces the mission or customer service capabilities of the Town.

All internet/intranet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via the IT system of the Town is considered part of the official records system and as such, all user and employee files, e-mail, documents, and other paper or electronically-stored material are subject to disclosure pursuant to the State Freedom of Information Act, Connecticut General Statutes, Section 1-18, et seq, as amended. As a public record, the management of the Town of Thomaston retains the right to inspect, copy, retrieve any data on the Town's IT system without prior approval of the employee.

All employee files, e-mail, documents, and other paper or electronically-stored material are subject to mandatory retention pursuant to the State's Record Retention Act (Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 11-8, 11-8a and 7-109, as amended) and to General Letter 95-1 issued on June 1, 1995 by the Office of the Public Records Administrator and State Archives.

Acceptable Uses.

Generally, employees may use the Town's equipment for official purposes only, or as authorized by the Town. As set forth in this policy, incidental personal use of the Town's IT resources by employees during personal time that is in compliance with this IT policy is considered to be an "authorized use" of Town property.

The Town's electronic systems may be used for the following acceptable uses, to the extent they promote official Town business:

1. To facilitate performance of job function;
2. To facilitate the communication of information in a timely manner;
3. To coordinate meetings of individuals, locations and Town resources;
4. To communicate with departments throughout the Town;

5. To communicate with outside organizations as required in order to perform an employee's job functions.

Prohibited Uses.

The Town's electronic systems and tools shall not be used for any unacceptable uses which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Promoting or conducting political activities.
2. Making personal use of e-mail, Intranet, Internet or other IT resources to advertise, trade (including buying or selling stocks), give away, solicit, or provide goods or services, except under circumstances and conditions that are specifically authorized by the Town.
3. Violating copyrights or software licensing agreements.
4. Engaging in unauthorized transactions that may incur a cost to the Town.
5. Disseminating, intentionally accessing, or storing offensive or disparaging information, including hate literature, pornographic or sexually explicit images, or discriminatory/racist literature.
6. Distributing e-mail to multi-users (e.g. all employees) outside your department without the specific approval of your department head.
7. Sending, or contriving to send, or re-transmitting anonymous messages.
8. Revealing or publicizing proprietary or confidential information.
9. Making or posting improper remarks, proposals, or sending posting messages that defame or slander other individuals.
10. Overriding or avoiding security and integrity procedures and devices.
11. Subscribing to mail lists or list servers that are not related to official Town business, or to professional enhancement in support of the Town's mission.
12. The loading of ANY software onto a Town Desktop Computer System from any source without prior approval from both the Head of that department and the MIS department is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to, Screen Savers, Image, video, or audio clips not intended for business purposes. It is also against policy to alter settings in your computer control panel, system registry, or any other areas dealing with advanced setting which may alter your computers performance.
13. Attaching or Installing ANY piece of hardware to a Town Desktop System without prior approval from both the Head of that department and the MIS department is also strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to, External modems, Zip drives, and non-standard Audio or Video Devises.
14. Removal of ANY piece of Town hardware or software from its intended location without prior approval from both the head of that department and the MIS department is strictly prohibited. This includes but is not limited to, Desktop computers, Printers, scanners, terminals and all software packages. No one at any time should move or change anything in any of the Town's Telecommunication closets. These changes are to made ONLY by members of the MIS department or by Contractors approved by the MIS department. Failure to comply with this policy could cause very costly down time.
15. Participating during duty hours in unauthorized chat rooms (not related to Town business or to job related/professional development) or playing computer games.
16. Transmitting or re-transmitting chain letters.
17. Conducting or participating in fund drives or charitable events not sponsored or authorized by the Town's Human Resources Department (e.g. Appropriate use of e-mail for authorized activities for charitable events, e.g. United Way Campaign, Red Cross Blood drives, etc is permitted).
18. Use of internet/e-mail system for gambling, union activities, or to promote/defame religious perspective.
19. Subscribing to push technology services that are not related to official Town business or to professional enhancement. This refers to subscription type services that send information to

personal computers automatically and routinely as a result of prior registration by the user. Examples of such services include: weather reports, sports news, hobby updates. Permitted push technology services are those that provide information on Town business or professional enhancement topics such as Government, environmental, health, or technology related subjects.

20. Establishing personal web sites or bulletin board systems not authorized by the Town Board of Selectmen.
21. Using Town logos to misrepresent personal materials as falling under official Town auspices.
22. Intentionally misrepresenting, either implicitly or explicitly, personal views or comments in electronic forums or E-mail as Town policy or position. (Note: If there is reasonable expectation that a personal communication could be interpreted as official business, then a disclaimer shall be used. For example, "My personal opinion is...", or "While not speaking on behalf of the Town of Thomaston, I think...").
23. Attempting to tamper with or inappropriately access ("break into") the computer system of another organization or person.
24. The Town reserves the right to amend or clarify this listing or add additional prohibitions at any time.

Privacy.

Town employees should be aware that e-mail messages may be read by others for a variety of valid reasons. Although this statement is true of many types of Town correspondence, the nature of e-mail can lead one to forget or disregard the fact that e-mail is not the private property of the sender or recipient even though passwords or encryption codes are used for security reasons. To the extent that employees prefer their personal information resources to remain free of access by supervisor and managers they should avoid use of the Town's IT resources and systems. Appropriate personnel may monitor usage at any time.

Except in the legitimate performance of their duties, the Town prohibits system administrators, agency officials, and supervisors from violating or overriding the privacy of an employee with respect to the information that the employee receives, stores, or transmits. Nevertheless, due to technical, administrative, or legal reasons, system administrators, agency officials and or supervisors may be authorized to access information, files, materials and messages that reside in hardware or software used by employees. Reasons for review and inspection include, but are not limited to, system hardware or software problems, general system failure, regular system maintenance, a lawsuit threatened or asserted against the Town, suspicion of a violation of Town policies, suspicion of widespread or individualized inappropriate use of the e-mail system, receipt of public records request, and/or a need to carry out task(s) or to provide service(s) when the responsible employee is otherwise unavailable.

Monitoring, Compliance and Disciplinary Action.

The use of the Town's IT resources is a privilege—not a right. The Town has the capability and the authority to evaluate the performance and use of its IT resources and will routinely monitor their use. Individuals who abuse these resources, knowingly interfere with the operation of the IT systems, or otherwise fail to comply with the provisions of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination of employment and possible loss or suspension of associated IT privileges.

Passwords.

1. In order to assure the security of the Town's IT resources, the Town shall provide users with private password protection.
2. Employees shall protect the Town's security by regularly changing their private passwords and by not sharing their private passwords with any other individual except for official Town business purposes.
3. Employee's shall protect the Town's security by logging off the system when the workstation is expected to be unattended and accessible to the public for any period of time.

Electronic Mail.

Messages to Legal Counsel. The e-mail system is not intended to transmit confidential or sensitive materials which are more appropriately communicated in written form or by personal conversation. No confidential, attorney-client communication shall be made by e-mail.

Board Members. The Town's elected officials are prohibited from using e-mail in such a manner that would result in a quorum of the Board contemporaneously reading and responding to e-mail messages from other members; and by using e-mail in any manner that would constitute a "meeting" under the State's Open Meeting law.

Home Page.

The purpose of the Town of Thomaston home page is to establish a government network which provides residents and non-residents information about the Town. All information posted on the Home Page shall be for the benefit of the Town of Thomaston as a whole and shall not benefit any individual differently from the benefit derived by the general public.

Each department head shall be responsible for providing accurate and current information for posting on the Home Page; no work related social events in the Town Hall shall be publicized on the Home page; and no information shall be posted on the Home Page without prior approval of the appropriate department head and the Board of Selectmen.

The Town makes the following disclaimers concerning access to its Home page, any links there from, and any information provided there:

1. The Town makes no warranties of any kind, express or implied, for the service it is providing.
2. The Town expressly disclaims liability, and shall not be held liable, for any material obtained through it's Home Page or through its Internet access or for use of any information retrieved there from even if the information is unlawful, incomplete, incorrect, or harmful in any way.
3. Use of information obtained from these sources is made at the user's risk, and the Town specifically denies any liability for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through these sources.
4. The Town does not endorse the content of any information obtained from the Internet.
5. The Town does not guarantee successful connection to the Internet.

Definitions.

Archive. To copy files into a long-term storage medium in order to retain for utilization backup.

Copyright infringement. "Copyright," is the exclusive right of a person or a legal entity to reproduce, publish or sell a work (e.g., a picture, written article or a computer program) which it has created. Copyright infringement may occur, if for example, an individual copies a computer program or other work without the author's permission. E-mail messages which have computer programs or artwork attached to them should be carefully analyzed to insure that no copyrights are violated by the use or other reproduction of the program or artwork.

Distribution list. A list of intended recipients of an e-mail communication.

Electronic mail ("e-mail"). Communications within and among Microsoft Exchange, the Town of Thomaston home page, Windows Internet Mail, Microsoft Internet Explorer, etc.

Encryption. The translation of data into a secret code.

LAN. A network (or group) of personal computers and related devices (e.g., printers) in a small area (such as an office) that are linked together by cable; that can directly communicate with other devices in the network, and that can share resources (e.g., directories ad files). LAN Administrators are those individual(s) in charge of insuring that the LAN works properly.

Network server. A computer which is dedicated to managing network traffic. Individual desktop computers rely on network servers for files, printers and software.

WAN. "WAN" is the acronym for Wide Area Network, which is a network (or group) of LAN's.

Acknowledgment.

I have read, understand, and will comply with the above policy regarding appropriate use of The Town of Thomaston's IT resources.

Name: (Please print) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____