

**SECTION HR 13**

**AMAHLATHI**  
**MUNICIPALITY**

**POLICY ON**

**COMPUTER,**

**E-MAIL**

**AND**

**INTERNET USAGE**

## SECTION HR 13

### COMPUTER, E-MAIL AND INTERNET USAGE

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## **SECTION HR 13**

### **COMPUTER, E-MAIL AND INTERNET USAGE**

#### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth policies and guidelines for use of Municipal computers and access to the e-mail and internet systems by the users of the system.

There are various reasons for the need of such a policy / guideline, for instance:

- a) A good policy protects both the employer and employee from misuse of the internet, e-mail and other electronic interfaces that might develop in the future.
- b) In putting into place a policy, the municipality needs to take into account its own goals and burdens (financial and otherwise), whilst considering the needs and expectations of employees.

It must be clearly understood that it is the intent of the Municipality to protect itself and the employees from misuse of Municipal time and property. This ensures that misuse of the system is a deliberate choice by an individual and not due to lack of knowledge regarding procedures and policies. The consequence that such action by a user might lead to should be unambiguous to all concerned.

The aim of the policy is not to be restrictive, but to assist employees to be successful and valuable corporate citizens. However, users have to realize that their private actions on the system might be confused with those of the employer. Therefore, the consequences of the association between the Municipality and the user could and should not be allowed to be detrimental to the Municipality.

#### **2. Use of Computers**

Computers are an integral part of everyday business life and we cannot escape the continuing growth in their use. This means that the monetary investment by the Municipality in infrastructure and IT personnel is huge, to the point where the effect of IT costs cannot be disregarded in the cost budgeting. Misuse of equipment can lead to losses for the Municipality, which cannot be tolerated. Indeed the time spent by employees on such misuse normally is time owned by the Municipality and paid for by means of a salary.

Examples of what users are not allowed include:

- a) Users will not unofficially load any program not strictly authorized and duly licensed for work purposes by the IT Department onto any computer. This includes games, screensavers, etc.

- b) Users will not play games in work time. There sometimes seems to be a feeling amongst people that laying games is an allowable pastime and of lesser concern. This train of thought should be severely discouraged and the offence be put into perspective.
- c) Users will not use the Municipal system to vandalise, damage or disable the property of another person or organization, will not make deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt equipment, software or system performance by spreading computer viruses or by any other means, will not tamper with, modify or change the Municipal System software, hardware or wiring or take any action to violate the Municipal System's security, and will not use the Municipal System in such a way as to disrupt the use of the system by other users.

### **3. Use of E-mail and Internet**

The following uses of the e-mail and internet system are considered unacceptable:

- a) Users will not use the Municipal system to access, review, upload, download, store, print, post, or distribute pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit material.
- b) Users will not use the Municipal System for political campaigning.
- c) Users will not use the Municipal System to transmit or receive obscene, abusive, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, disrespectful, or sexually explicit language.
- d) Users will not use the Municipal System to access, review, upload, download, store, print, post, or distribute materials that use language to images that are inappropriate to the work setting or disruptive to the work environment and will not post information or materials that could cause damage or danger of disruption.
- e) Users will not use the Municipal System to access, review, upload, download, store, print, post, or distribute materials that use language or images that advocate violence or discrimination toward other people or that may constitute harassment or discrimination.
- f) Users will not use the Municipal System to knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or to harass another person, or to engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- g) Users will not use the Municipal System to engage in any illegal act or violate any local, provincial or government regulation, statute or law.

- h) Users will not use the Municipal System to gain unauthorized access to information resources or to access another person's materials, information or files without the implied or direct permission of that person.
- i) Users will not use the Municipal System to post private information about another person or to post personal contact information about themselves or other persons including, but not limited to, addresses, telephone numbers, work addresses, identification numbers, account numbers, access codes or passwords, and will not repost a message that was sent to the user privately without permission of the person who sent the message.
- j) Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Municipal System or another system through the Municipal System, attempt to log in through another person's account, or use computer accounts, access codes or network identification other than those assigned to the user.
- k) Users will not use the Municipal System to violate copyright laws, or usage licensing agreements, or otherwise to use another person's property without the person's prior approval or proper citation, including the downloading or exchanging of pirated software or copying software to or from any Municipal Manager.
- l) Users will not use the Municipal System for unauthorized commercial purposes or for financial gain unrelated to the official business of the Municipality. Users will not use the Municipal System to offer or provide goods or services or for product advertisement, other than for work purposes. Users will not use the Municipal System to purchase goods or services for personal use without authorization from the appropriate supervisor or manager.
- m) If a user inadvertently accesses unacceptable materials or an unacceptable internet site, the user shall immediately disclose the inadvertent access to an appropriate Manager. This disclosure may serve as a defense against an allegation that the user has intentionally violated this policy.

#### **4. Right to Privacy**

Users must realize that all the equipment, as well as the information it contains, belongs to the Municipality. Users should consequently have no expectation of privacy related to the use of any Municipal System. The Municipality as a result has the fullest right to monitor the e-mail and internet system, as well as accessing data such as e-mails received by employees.

In the spirit of mutual respect and trust employees must also be aware that it is not the policy of the Municipality to monitor the e-mail on a constant basis, and that they will be notified if specific Departments will be

under constant monitoring for certain reasons. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the network might however reveal that violations of the policy by specific users have occurred, which will result in an individual investigation, without any advance warning.

**5. Private Use**

The Municipality agrees that a certain amount of incidental private use is allowed. This use however must not exceed what would be regarded by any reasonable person as fair and just, and is subject to the terms and conditions of the policy. Private use of the system is a privilege and not a right, and what would be considered suitable use on a private account on another system will not necessarily be suitable for the Municipal System. The Municipality may restrict the users access to the system at Management's discretion.

**6. Consequence of Non-Compliance**

A failure to comply with the policy will be viewed as a serious disciplinary transgression and appropriate disciplinary action, which may include the dismissal of the employee concerned, will result from such action.

**N.B. This Policy must read in conjunction with the corresponding Policy in the IT Policy Manual.**