

<b>COUNTY OF SAMPSON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>				
Policy Number:	-----	Title:	Electronic Communication Security and Privacy	
Date of Adoption:	1/6/14	Date of Last Revision:	1/6/14	Page 1

**Purpose**

This policy addresses the electronic security and privacy concerns with regard to the use of technology resources belonging to or used in the conduct of the business of the County of Sampson. The County provides its employees access to a variety of technology resources and electronic communication systems to allow for the timely and efficient conduct of County business. All such electronic communication systems, including, but not limited to, email, fax, telephone, and voice mail and all information transmitted, received or stored in these systems, are the property of the County of Sampson. None of these electronic communications are private communications, and as such are subject to monitoring and disclosure pursuant to law or regulation. Providing timely, efficient and accurate information is the primary function of these resources, and any activity or action that interferes with this purpose is prohibited. Failure to adhere to this policy places the individual at risk for legal liabilities, potential embarrassment and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**Administration**

Each Department Head shall become thoroughly familiar with the requirements set forth in this policy and to administer this policy consistently within their department and with other departments. The Department Head shall explain this policy within their department and ensure that it is fully implemented. It is the Department Head's responsibility to ensure that their department's users abide by these requirements and guidelines set forth in this and any related documents. Department Heads and IT (Information Technology) personnel have the authority to inspect the content of any equipment, files or mail in the normal course of their supervisory responsibilities. Reasons for review include, but are not limited to, investigation of network slowdown; system hardware or software problems including software license compliance, general system failure, litigation or potential litigation; reasonable suspicion of a crime or violation of policy; or a need to perform work or provide a service when an employee is not available. All communication system users acknowledge their consent that the County may, at its discretion, inspect, use or disclose any electronic communications and/or data without further notice for any legitimate business, legal or discretionary purpose. The County may utilize monitoring software to administer this policy.

**Appropriate Use of County Electronic Communications Equipment**

The use of County electronic communication equipment for purposes other than official business is prohibited, except for brief and occasional personal use, as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in expense to the County of Sampson. Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the ability to perform daily job activities. Supervisors should monitor the extent of personal use of these assets during regular working hours.

Any business or personal use of the Internet or email by a County employee shall clearly and accurately identify the employee. Anonymous or pseudonymous use is prohibited. Email is considered an official form of communication between departments and between employees. County employees should have no expectation of privacy in anything they store, send or receive via the County's email system. Sampson County may monitor messages without prior notice.

When transmitting information via County communication equipment, employees should consider that persons other than the addressee can read the content of the transmission and

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that the message may be later disclosed to outside parties or a court in connection with litigation. Therefore, employees are required to maintain the highest standards of courtesy, professionalism and legality when transmitting information.

The following uses of the County's communication systems are strictly prohibited:

- The use of the communications systems to compromise the integrity of Sampson County and its business in any way.
- The intentional transmission of confidential or unlawful information. This includes, but is not limited to, statements or opinions that are or could be considered libelous, slanderous, defamatory, discriminatory, pornographic, inflammatory, threatening, or harassing.
- The intentional display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, cartoons, or any communication containing profane or offensive language, ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or preference, age, citizenship, marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, or other grounds protected under applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and/or executive orders, (unless such display is part of a law enforcement or other legitimate government investigation).
- The use of communications systems to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, or outside organizations that are not authorized by the County of Sampson.
- The installation or downloading of software from outside vendors or the Internet without prior authorization from IT personnel. This includes software by third-party vendors, as well as shareware, freeware, personal software and Internet distributed programs.

Employees should not open, redirect or otherwise tamper with transmissions, other than their own or those that they are authorized to open by their supervisor or by the person to whom the transmission is addressed. Employees shall not fake or alter sent or received transmissions.

**Security**

Employees shall not permit unauthorized persons to use the County electronic network/communications systems. At no time should an employee allow a temporary worker, contractor, another employee, or other person use of their login information. Initial passwords are assigned by supervisors or by the IT department. These should not be provided to other employees or to persons outside the County of Sampson. Initial passwords should be changed as soon as possible using the instructions provided by a supervisor or by the IT staff. The County reserves the right to override any employee-selected passwords and/or codes, and employees must provide the County with any such codes or passwords to facilitate access as needed. Periodically, employees may be required to change their passwords. At all times, the employee is responsible for their computer account. Passwords should not be stored in

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computer data files, on the network, or be displayed openly at any workstation. Each employee is responsible for all actions taken while using his/her user profile or password.

Employees are responsible for protecting their computers against virus attack and other debilitating events by following their supervisor's or IT's guidelines. Employees must not disable any antivirus or other application installed on their computer equipment. Any file, program or document received on any media, through the Internet or through file transfer must be checked for viruses immediately. Employee should be cautious when receiving email messages they were not expecting containing an attachment. It should not be opened if there is any doubt about the type of file, content or sender, so as to prevent viruses from infecting the County's entire network. All data disks and files entering or leaving the County of Sampson's property should be scanned for viruses. Employees should log out of the network before leaving the office each day and/or when they will be away from their desk for an extended period of time.

Employees are expected to use the standard software provided by their department or IT. Employees may not download or install applications, demos or upgrades without permission. Employees may not install their own email system. Employees may not use instant messaging, unless approved by management.

**Public Nature of Electronic Communications**

Electronic communication is a public record like any other public document. Users must understand that any communications created, received, or backed up on the County system may be construed to be public documents and thus may be subject to legal requests for public disclosure. This includes communications that users may think of, incorrectly, as personal and private. County employees are advised that they have no privacy rights and that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy when using County computer technology or communications systems.

**Use of Personal Equipment for the Conduct of County Business**

Unless specifically authorized in writing, employees may not use personal computer equipment to conduct company business. Employees are reminded that all communications sent in connection with County business, whether the communication is sent via a County system or personal equipment, is subject to inspection and may be classified as a public record and may be required to be produced pursuant to a public records request or legal discovery.

**Telephones**

County telephone systems are intended primarily to accomplish the work of the County. Providing services to internal and external customers is the first priority; therefore personal use should be limited to brief and occasional personal use, as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate and does not result in expense to the County of Sampson. Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the ability to perform daily job activities. Supervisors should monitor the extent of personal use of these assets during regular working hours. Personal use of the County's long distance service is prohibited.

**Cellular Phones**

The use of cellular phones for the conduct of County business is covered under the County's Cell Phone Policy.

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**Printers, Copiers and Faxes**

Photocopy machines, printers and fax machines shall be used for the transaction of County business. Any personal use must be pre-approved by the Department Head, and the costs of such reimbursed at the prevailing rate. Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material is strictly prohibited.

**Violations of Policy**

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of employment and criminal prosecution. It is the employee's responsibility to obtain clarification from their supervisor or IT Department if they do not fully understand any part of this policy.