

| <b>Administrative Polices and Procedures</b> |                                  |                               |                 |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>SUBJECT: eMail Usage Policy</b>           |                                  |                               | <b>IS 13.22</b> |
| Effective Date:<br>December 29, 1997         | Revision Date:<br>September 2002 | Revision #:<br>2              | Page: 1 of 3    |
| Authority: Town Manager                      |                                  | Information Systems Director: |                 |
| Revises Policy:                              |                                  |                               |                 |

**I. PURPOSE**

This establishes the Town’s policy for the acceptable use of eMail services utilizing Town software, hardware, and resources.

**II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Town employees, full-time, part-time, contract or otherwise and Town volunteers who use eMail via Town resources.

Use of Town resources to access eMail denotes your acceptance of the Town’s eMail policy. Disregard or violation of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action pursuant to the Town’s Personnel Code and may result in more stringent restrictions for all eMail users.

This policy statement addresses:

1. EMail Usage
2. EMail Etiquette
3. Staff responses to eMail inquiries
4. Florida Public Record Laws governing eMails
5. Security

**III. POLICY**

**EMail Usage**

EMail at the Town is a tool for business communications. EMail can be an effective tool to speed information exchange. It can eliminate the need for some phone calls and meetings and can even help you to brainstorm ideas within a group. But you must be conscientious and observe common sense or you minimize its effectiveness and cause disruption to others.

**General eMail Etiquette**

**Some Do’s and Don’ts**

- 1) Do not post personal information about any individual unless you have received that person’s consent.

Occasionally messages are posted regarding employees health or personal life events. This is acceptable only if the person you are posting the information about consents to its broadcast and the receivers of the information are interested in hearing about it. If you’re in doubt as to either of these criteria - don’t post it.

- 2) Use meaningful subject line information.

Leaving the subject line blank or putting in cryptic information basically mandates the receiver open and read your message to know the content. If your subject line is meaningful (John Doe Retirement Party or Upcoming Transportation Mtg) the receiver can prioritize and decide when to read your message.



- 3) Limit sending messages to masses of people.

Propagating everyone's mailboxes (spamming) with messages that have meaning to only one or a few seems to create the majority of problems. Please be as selective in WHO you send your message to as well as WHAT message you send. General announcements to all Town employees shall be posted to the Daily Announcements or one of the Classifieds folders in the Public Folders Section.

- 4) Do not post silly or inane messages to distribution groups.

Jokes of the day and questions such as "who was the lead guitar player for Deep Purple in 1973?" are examples. Feel free to place these in our "The Lighter Side" folders.

- 5) Do not post insulting, degrading, or vulgar messages.

Flaming is inappropriate and unprofessional. Flaming will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken.

- 6) Send only to the appropriate people.

You can create your own personal group/distribution lists. If you are a member of a committee working on a specific project, create your own group/distribution list by clicking on **Tools, Address Book**, click the **New Entry** icon, select **Personal Distribution List**. Provide your group name, then click **Add/Remove members**.

- 7) Keep it short and simple.

Try to limit each eMail to one or two topics and don't ramble. Long tedious eMails will, typically, not be read.

### **Receiver Responsibilities**

As an eMail recipient you have some responsibilities as well.

- 1) Govern your own work environment.

We are not Pavlovian dogs who must drop everything when an eMail notification arrives! If notifications are disruptive, turn them off: Then you decide when you want to go through your eMail. To turn off notification select **Tools, Options**, select the **E-Mail** tab, and de-select **Play a Sound, Briefly Change Move Cursor**, and **Display Notification** message under *when a new item arrives box*.

- 2) Politely notify the sender of eMails that you find disruptive or inappropriate and ask them to remove you from their distribution list.

The key word here is "politely" and do remember Do's and Don'ts #5.

- 3) Continue to notify Information Systems of inappropriate usage of eMail.

### **Staff responses to eMail inquiries**

Many of you are now corresponding with the public using eMail. In so doing, you are acting as a representative of the Town and should conduct all eMail transactions accordingly. You should treat eMail just as you would a letter or memo to be typed and mailed.

- 1) Construct your eMails with the same formality and business structure as you would a standard letter. EMail, by its nature, is typically an informal communications tool. However, you are representing the Department and the Town and all communications should be professional and business-like.
- 2) Spell check your eMails prior to sending.
- 3) Copy all communications to your supervisor and/or department/division director. It is important that supervisors be kept informed, therefore, a copy of the eMail inquiry and your reply should be forwarded to the appropriate staff within the department.

**Florida Public Records Laws Governing EMail**

All eMails received or created in the transaction of official business are considered Public Record and are governed by the State's Public Records Laws. It is important that you do not indiscriminately delete eMails without first considering these laws. According to the Department of State the following guidelines pertain to eMails.

- 1) EMail are Public Record when they are created or received in the transaction of Official Business.
- 2) EMail are not subject to Public Records laws when they consist of uncirculated materials and are merely preliminary or precursors to future documents and which are not in and of themselves intended to serve as final evidence of the knowledge to be reported.
- 3) EMail are to be readily accessible and available to all authorized users.
- 4) EMail must be organized and stored in a filing system or repository.
- 5) Transitory or personal messages that do not support business purposes should be deleted in a timely manner.
- 6) EMail of convenience or reference copies should be deleted after the record of copy (master) has been appropriately filed.
- 7) EMail record copies (masters) have the same retention periods as records in other formats.
- 8) EMail may be deleted/destroyed only in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 1B-24, Florida Administrative Code.

It is each department's responsibility to manage its records in accordance with State Guidelines. Information Systems does not review individual eMail content nor do we provide records management or archival services. If you have questions regarding public records and eMail, or how you may archive eMail in compliance with the State laws please contact the Town Clerk's Office. They have established guidelines and procedures specifically for eMail.

For additional information regarding records management of eMails, see the following resources:

- < Chapter 1B-24 - Florida Administrative Code.
- < Chapter 119 - Florida State Statues.
- < State of Florida Electronic Records: Records Management Practices, Department of State (copy on file in Information Systems or Town Clerks offices).
- < Your department's record manager.
- < Town Clerk's office.

**Security**

The Town has implemented software at each workstation to scan for viruses. However, a virus can potentially breach our security. You are advised to not to open attachments from persons unknown to you. The Town will continue to implement security measures on our system to protect the Town's investment. Realize that you play a major role in protecting these assets by exercising diligence in screening your eMails and deleting and/or notifying Information Systems of suspect communications. If you are unsure of an eMail or sender, contact the Help Desk.

Large file attachments place a strain on the network and other computer resources of the Town. The Town's operating software limits the file size of attachments to 3 MB. If you have a file larger than this that you must send, or are expecting from another agency, you must contact the Network Administrator.

**IV. PROCEDURES**

As a standard operating procedure, Information Systems staff will review these records periodically to determine policy compliance by individual employees.

**V. DEFINITIONS**

- Flaming: Sending an angry, hostile, or abusive eMail to one or more persons.  
Spamming: Posting irrelevant or inappropriate messages to one or more news groups or mailing lists.

I have read, understand, and accept the Town of Jupiter's eMail Use Policy (IS 13.22).

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Signature

Date