	CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE		
Policy Name:	Internet Usage Policy	Date Adopted by Council :	August 2 2018

I. Purpose

It is the policy of the City to provide guidance to employees so that City resources are used efficiently, effectively, honestly, and appropriately. Employee access to computers and network resources imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to relevant City policies and local, North Carolina, and Federal laws.

II. Employee Responsibilities and Rights

A. Use of Resources:


1. The term “resources” refers to City-owned devices connected to City-owned network resources and personal devices connected to City-owned wireless resources. City computer, email, network, and wireless resources are provided to employees in order to assist the employee in performing assigned work for the benefit of the citizens of Hendersonville and coworkers.
2. Resources should be used for City business only, with the exception of incidental personal use or an emergency situation.

B. Privacy of all Employees:

1. Employee privacy is preserved by the City to the greatest extent possible. Electronic and other technological methods must not be used to infringe upon privacy.
2. Periodic review by authorized City personnel of all materials sent and received through City resources is permitted.
3. Employees should utilize such systems at their own risk and with awareness that City computer and other technological resources are not to be treated as personal computer and technological resources.

C. Freedom of Expression:

1. The Constitutional right to freedom of speech applies to all employees of the City no matter the medium used. However, City employees are liable and accountable for all expression exhibited during the performance of official City duties, while using City-owned resources, and while connected to City wireless resources.
2. City employees should recognize the difference between freedom of expression as a general member of the public and freedom of expression as a public employee of the City of Hendersonville.
3. Any questions regarding what constitutes permissible freedom of expression should be directed to the Department Head or Human Resources Department.

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D. Ownership of Data and Information:


1. All forms of data stored or transmitted on or with City computer and network resources are the property of the City.

E. Freedom from Harassment and Common Courtesy:

1. All employees have the right not to be harassed by other employees while at work, while utilizing City email services, while using City resources, or while connected to City wireless resources.
2. Each employee is responsible to all other City network users. Respecting and valuing the privacy of others, recognizing and respecting the diversity of the workforce and the community population, behaving ethically, and complying with all legal restrictions regarding the usage of information is required.
3. No employee of the City may use City-owned devices or resources of any kind to libel, slander, or harass any member of the public. The following is explicitly prohibited:
 - Intentionally annoying, harassing, terrifying, intimidating, threatening, offending, or bothering another person by conveying obscene language, pictures, or other materials, or by threatening bodily harm to the recipient or the recipient’s family.
 - Intentionally contacting another person repeatedly with the intent to annoy, harass, or bother, whether or not any actual message is communicated, and where no purpose of legitimate communication exists or the recipient has expressed a desire for the communication to cease.
 - Intentionally invading the privacy of another or threatening the invasion of privacy of another.

F. Privacy of Information:

1. Personal information, messages, and records, no matter on what medium they are stored or transmitted, may be subject to access by the City if on City devices, network resources, or on personal devices connected to City wireless resources.
2. While personal record, information and messages made on a City owned device may not be subject to public access, they may be subject to access by the City.
3. No employee should look at, copy, alter, or destroy another individual’s personal files without explicit permission from a Department Head or their designee.
4. Employees are reminded that being able to access a file or other information does not automatically imply permission to do so.

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5. It is a violation of this policy for any employee to use or help another use any Private Information for the employee’s or another’s personal use or any other unapproved or inappropriate purpose.

“Private information” as used here means any private, personal or sensitive information gathered by the City or in the City’s custody regarding any individuals, businesses or other entities.

G. Information Integrity:

1. It is the responsibility of the employee to be aware of the potential for the manipulation of information and the possible effects of manipulation of information as it relates to City business.
2. Employees are encouraged to be thoroughly aware of the ease of which electronically stored information can be changed and are further encouraged to verify the integrity and completeness of information the employee compiles or uses.

H. Responsibility for Assigned Resources:

1. Each employee is responsible for the security, maintenance, and proper care of assigned computer resources and personal workspace.
2. Each employee is responsible, in coordination with the Department Head, for the security and integrity of City information stored on City devices assigned to the employee.
3. Employees should avoid storing passwords or other information that can be used to gain access to other City computing resources.


III. Email and Other Electronic Communications

Electronic communication provides a useful way to exchange ideas, share files, and maintain relationships with coworkers and members of the community. Messages sent and received through City network resources, including wirelessly, may be considered property of the City. This includes but is not limited to email and social media sites.

The City’s equipment and resources include but are not limited to cellular phones, telephones, tablets, computers and laptops, and network resources, including wireless resources. They should not be used to communicate sensitive or confidential information.

Employees should not have any expectation of privacy with respect to messages or files sent, received, or stored on the City’s computer or network resources. Authorized access to employee electronic communications by Department Heads or their designee includes the following:

- A. Access by Information Technology personnel during the course of system maintenance and administration

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- B. Access approved by the employee, employee’s supervisor, or the City Manager when there is an urgent need to access the employee’s mailbox or other computer files
- C. Access approved by the employee’s supervisor and the City Manager when there is reason to believe the employee is using the communication system in violation of the City’s policy
- D. Access approved by the City Attorney in response to the City’s receipt of a court order or request from law enforcement

IV. Use of the Internet

City resources are provided for City employees for City business only with the exception of incidental personal use. All existing City personnel policies apply to employee conduct on the Internet, including those that deal with employee performance, personal conduct, intellectual property protection, privacy, misuse of City resources, sexual harassment, information and data security, and confidentiality.

Employees must conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the Internet. Employees must also respect copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, and the prerogatives of others. Unlawful or inappropriate usage may garner negative publicity for the City, expose the City to significant legal liabilities, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for the employee.

V. Personal Usage While at Work


City resources may not be used in connection with compensated outside work or for the benefit of individuals or organizations not related to the City of Hendersonville, except in connection with official City activities.

Incidental and short duration personal use of City computer and network resources, including wireless connection, is authorized, provided such use occurs on the employee’s own time and such use is legal, ethical, does not compromise the City’s reputation or the public’s confidence in the City as an organization, and does not compromise the City’s networks and systems.

Any incidental use must not interfere with an employee’s ability to perform their official duties and must not interfere with other users’ access to resources.

VI. City Websites

Endorsing or promoting services, entities, or products not sponsored by the City is not allowed on City websites unless the City Manager or their designee authorizes such variance.

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VII. Summary

The items addressed in this policy are common sense items. As holders of confidential information, there comes a level of responsibility to take proper precautions to protect it. The use of the Internet and City-owned resources is a privilege which can and will be revoked when necessary and appropriate. The primary purpose of this policy is to maintain a productive and professional work environment for conducting City business.

Violations of this policy will be addressed in accordance with the City of Hendersonville's Personnel Policy. The City Manager is authorized to make future revisions to this policy. It is understood that any substantive changes to the policy should only be implemented after first consulting with the City Council.

