

**PERSONNEL/PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**MEMORANDUM NO. 50**

**TO:** AGENCY HEADS AND PAYROLL CONTACTS

**FROM:**



Peter J. Schroth  
Human Resources Director

May 17, 2004  
Date

**SUBJECT:** Computer Use

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediate

**EXPIRATION DATE:** Indefinite

**1. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide policies and procedures related to employee use of the Internet and the County's electronic communication systems and information resources.

**2. POLICY:**

Fairfax County provides computer systems that allow access to the Internet and to electronic communication. These systems are the property of the County, and they are provided to facilitate the effective and efficient conduct of official business. Employees may be permitted access to the Internet and electronic communication systems to assist in the performance of their jobs. Incidental and occasional personal use of the Internet or electronic communication systems is generally permitted.

**3. PRIVACY**

Employees who use the County's Internet and/or electronic communication systems are considered to be system "users." Users should not have an expectation of privacy in any message, file, image or data created, sent, retrieved or received by use of these County systems. Agencies have a right to monitor any and all aspects of their computer systems, chat groups, or news groups visited by users, material downloaded or uploaded and e-mail sent or received by users. Such monitoring may occur at any time, without notice and without the employee's permission.

Additionally, electronic records may be subject to the mandatory disclosure provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and such records may be subject to public disclosure.

#### 4. **PERSONAL USE**

Personal use is any use that is not job related. In general, incidental and occasional personal use of the County's Internet access or electronic communication is permitted; however, personal use is prohibited if it:

- Interferes with the employee's productivity or work performance or with the productivity or work performance of another employee;
- Adversely affects the efficient operation of the computer system;
- Violates this procedure, the Standards of Conduct, the County Executive's Information Technology Security Policy Memorandum Number 70-05 or any other policy, regulation, law or procedure.

Employees using the County's Internet or electronic communication systems for personal use must present their communication in such a way as to be clear that the communication is personal and not communication from the agency or the County.

#### 5. **PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

Certain activities are prohibited when using the Internet or electronic communications, except when necessary for the performance of duty. These include, but are not limited to:

- Accessing, downloading, transmitting, printing or storing information with sexually explicit content;
- Downloading or transmitting fraudulent, threatening, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, violent, harassing, discriminatory messages or images;
- Accessing or downloading gambling sites;
- Pursuit of personal profit or gain or engaging in outside employment or personal business, unauthorized fund raising or political activities;
- Engaging in any prohibited activities as described in the County Executive's Information Technology Security Policy Memorandum Number 70-05;
- Unauthorized downloading, printing or transmitting information protected by federal or state copyright laws;
- Any use of peer-to-peer applications or software, for example, those enabling file sharing of music, pirated software or videos;
- Misuse or misapplication of network privileges.

#### 6. **PROCEDURES:**

A supervisor who suspects an employee of possible inappropriate use of County computers or electronic communication systems should consider the following actions:

- Direct questions concerning possible violations of the prohibited activities listed above to the Department of Human Resources, Employee Relations Division, at (703)324-3495. Questions concerning possible violations of the

County Executive's Information Technology Security Policy Memorandum Number 70-05 should be directed to the Department of Information Technology at (703) 324-2755.

- Supervisors or agency information security coordinators should complete and submit the "Incident Reporting Form" contained in the County Executive's Information Technology Security Policy Procedural Memorandum Number 70-05.
- In cases where employees have engaged in the prohibited activities listed above, supervisors should consult with staff from the Employee Relations Division, Department of Human Resources at (703) 324-3495 regarding appropriate disciplinary action.

## 7. **VIOLATIONS**

Engaging in prohibited activities involving the Internet or electronic communications shall be considered a violation of the County's Standards of Conduct and may subject the employee to discipline, up to and including dismissal. When responding to a possible violation of law or County policy involving the use of computer systems, the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Information Technology may involve staff from other County agencies, including, but not limited to, Internal Audit, Office of the County Attorney, and the Police Department.

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Employee Relations Division, Department of Human Resources at (703) 324-3495.