



## **Administrative Regulations Office of the Mayor**

**Title:** ELECTRONIC MEDIA SYSTEMS (INTERNET/INTRANET)

**A.R. Number:** 2.5 **Effective Date:** 2/1/2009 **Page:** 1 of 5

**Supersedes:** Electronic Media Systems (Internet/Intranet) **A.R.:** 2.5 **DATED:** 2/1/2007

### **I. POLICY**

In accordance with, and subject to the City's Data Security Standard and Remote Access Service policy, this Administrative Regulation is applicable to all City of Richmond employees and other individuals authorized to use any data network owned or operated by the City of Richmond.

### **II. SCOPE**

The Department of Information Technology (DIT) has developed standards to govern the use of all forms of electronic media and combines and supersedes all previously issued standards issued by the Internet Policy Committee, DIT and other agencies for this subject matter. As used in this administrative regulation, "electronic media" includes but is not necessarily limited to the following: e-mail (electronic-mail), Internet use, Intranet bulletin boards, electronic subscription services, electronic documents and any other forms of electronic communication. Electronic media systems are a tool for City employees for the purpose of providing an effective method to communicate, increase productivity, perform research and obtain information that will assist in performing job-related tasks and to conduct official City business.

### **III. PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Ownership**

All network systems, hardware, software, temporary or permanent files and any related systems or devices are the property of the City of Richmond. These include, but are not limited to, files, documents, spreadsheets, messages, and notes that reside in part or in whole on any City of Richmond server, workstation, local area network (LAN), or individual computer.

Supervisors have the authority to inspect the contents of any hardware, software, document(s) or file(s) of their subordinates in the normal course of their supervisory responsibilities. Department of Information Technology staff shall extract information, files or documents when requested by authorized supervisory personnel. Reasons for review include, but are not limited to:

- System, hardware and software problems;
- General system failure;
- A legal proceeding involving the City;
- Suspicion of a crime;
- Violation of administrative regulation;
- A need to perform work or provide a service when the employee is unavailable.

#### **B. Confidentiality/Privacy**

Employees using the City's data systems and/or tools provided by the City of Richmond have no guarantee of privacy with respect to the use of these systems and/or tools. Any files, documents, e-mail, electronic transactions, or data of any kind that is created, stored, or transported via the City's electronic media and data systems are considered the property of the City, and are subject to inspection and review at any time. Furthermore, under the Freedom of Information Act, any messages, documents, spreadsheets, or files are



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potentially a matter of public record and subject to disclosure. Personal opinions expressed using these systems remain those of the individual and are not necessarily those of the City of Richmond and/or its management.

### C. Use of Electronic Media Systems

The electronic mail systems (e-mail), Internet, Intranet, hardware, software, tools and information are provided for the purpose of conducting business for the City of Richmond only. Allowable use of the network and information both locally and via remote access include the following:

- To facilitate performance of job functions;
- To conduct research in accordance with an employee's job duties and functions;
- To communicate with outside organizations as required in order to perform an employee's job functions;
- For personal communications/business, within reason, necessary as a result of employees performing their job functions.

Brief use of these systems for personal purposes is permitted. However, systematic and pervasive use of these systems for personal purposes is prohibited.

### D. Prohibited Uses

Prohibited uses of the electronic media systems and networked information include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Illegal activities;
- Threats;
- Harassment;
- Slander;
- Defamation;
- Obscene or suggestive message(s) or obscene or offensive graphical image(s);
- Political endorsements;
- Commercial activities;
- Distribution of Chain Letters;
- Solicitation for personal gain;
- Transmission of a message with someone else's name as author without the author's permission;
- Transmission of unacceptable content which includes but is not limited to material which is pornographic, racist, sexist, or contains inappropriate language for an office environment;
- Any use that impairs or damages any system operation or that impairs or damages the use of the system by another account holder;
- Unauthorized access to others' files;
- Use of or access to playing or distribution of computer games;
- Distribution of copies in violation of copyright laws;
- Forwarding or distributing messages not of legitimate City of Richmond business;



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- Participation in web logs (“blogging”) during work hours;
- Distribution of messages which are obscene, harass, or which promote religious, political, or other personal positions or agenda, which are not associated with one’s position as a City of Richmond employee (e.g. “have a blessed day” stated on voice mail greeting);
- Personal entertainment use (such as listening to Internet radio, viewing network TV/movies or connection with any other broadcast media); Unauthorized use of User ID to send or receive messages;
- Unauthorized alteration of e-mail (e.g. alteration by non-author);
- Broadcast messages (mass mailings) should be limited to a user's agency. Any correspondence that needs to cross agency lines should be referred to the Office of Press Secretary to the Mayor.

### E. Electronic Mail Etiquette

An electronic mail message is in essence, a letter on City stationery. As such commitments, tone, or comments may be interpreted as those of the organization. It is important for all users of the electronic mail systems use care and caution when sending messages. The following advice is provided to all employees:

- Spell-check, proofread and re-read your mail before you send it;
- Keep messages brief and to the point;
- Format messages for easy reading;
- Use appropriate business style and language when communicating formally;
- Be wary of the use of informal language. The nature of e-mail lends itself to informality, but language taken out of context can be injurious to individuals or the City of Richmond. Rule of thumb: if you would be unwilling to have the message appear on the evening news, do not send it;
- Do not over-distribute messages; only post messages when they are relevant;
- Respect the privacy of others; and don’t be fooled by the illusion of privacy;
- Cite appropriate text and references in responding to a particular event, topic, or issue;
- Separate opinion from non-opinion;
- Respect copyright and license agreements;
- Do not mark messages URGENT unless they really are;
- Sleep on a message that you are uncertain about sending;
- Avoid use of all CAPS. In Internet-eze, this is considered shouting;
- Be careful what you say about yourself or others;
- Ask yourself: would I want a jury to read this e-mail?;
- Be polite. Make sure short messages don't come across as brusque or curt;
- Don't send offensive jokes or frivolous messages;
- Don't write anything you wouldn't want repeated. E-mail can be forwarded to anyone, in or out of the organization;
- Work out problems face-to-face, not on e-mail;
- The content of the message should be something you would be comfortable saying in an open business meeting;
- Check mail daily and delete non-record and transitory items from the “Inbox”, “Sent Items”, and “Deleted Items” folders routinely;
- When going on vacation or extended leaves, use the "out of office" assistant tool.



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### F. Disclaimer

The City of Richmond makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the City of Richmond Electronic Media accounts and will not be responsible for any damages suffered while on these systems. These damages include loss of data as a result of delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by the system or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. The City of Richmond specifically disclaims any responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through its network services.

### G. Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority. If you identify a security problem, notify the DIT Help Desk, your department Automation Coordinator or your supervisor at once. Never demonstrate the problem to other users. Never use another individual's account. Always attempt to logout of the system when you leave your workstation. Any user identified as a security risk due to behavior on the electronic media systems will be denied access, and will be subject to discipline for failure to comply with this policy.

### H. Vandalism

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to observe information intended to be private or to change data created or owned by another user or any other agency or network that is accessible from the Internet or to make any unauthorized changes to the appearance or operational characteristics of any network system. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or downloading of computer viruses. Any vandalism will result in the loss of the account and legal referral.

### I. Legal Requirements

E-mail and other electronic media system records are subject to both public record retention and freedom of information disclosure requirements. Each agency is responsible for the proper maintenance and disclosure of its electronic records pursuant to state law, including the production of e-mail in response to any freedom of information request. *See* A.R. 3.5 concerning Records Retention for guidelines on complying with the Virginia Public Records Act, Va. Code Ann. § 42.1-10—42.1-91 and A.R. 3.1 concerning Freedom of Information for guidelines on complying with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Va. Code §§ 2.2-3700—2.2-3714.

### J. DIT Backup of E-mail

As set forth in Administrative Regulation 3.5 – Virginia Public Records Policy, public records belong to the City and, in particular, to the agency that creates them. Consequently, each agency is responsible for its own records, including e-mail records. DIT maintains backups of e-mail records for a period of sixty (60) days for disaster recovery and similar purposes. However, following that sixty-day period, records, which may appear on any backup tapes or disks, will be destroyed. The DIT backup tapes or disks are not a substitute for proper management by an agency of its own e-mail records.



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#### **K. Violations of Administrative Regulation/Disciplinary Actions**

Violations of this Administrative Regulation by City of Richmond employees constitutes grounds for disciplinary actions up to and including termination in accordance with the City's Personnel Rules, and other applicable Administrative Regulations, as well as any agency rules, policies, or regulations.

Violations of this Administrative Regulation by non-City employees, granted special access to the City of Richmond network could result in the revocation of their access privileges and/or termination.

#### **V. REGULATION UPDATE**

The Office of the Mayor and the Department of Information Technology shall be responsible for modifications to this Policy.

**APPROVED:**

  
**MAYOR**