

# **MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERNET USE POLICY & PROCEDURES**

## **Purpose**

To establish a policy pertaining to the use of the Internet by the employees of Montgomery County.

## **Background**

The Internet is a worldwide collection of interconnected networks. Electronic tools associated with Internet access, such as electronic mail (email) and the World Wide Web (WWW), help county employees streamline information access and conduct business. These tools are used to facilitate inter-agency communication and information processing. There are many parallels between the new electronic information tool and older technologies used for similar purposes (for example telephone and written correspondence). As such, the same general concepts of professionalism and appropriate use of publicly owned or publicly provided information processing resources apply.

The Internet is a business tool provided at significant cost. Employees are expected to use Internet access for business related purposes, i.e. to communicate with vendors, federal agencies, state agencies, etc., to research relevant topics and obtain useful business information. Employees must conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the Internet, respecting the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, privacy and rights of others, as in any other business dealings. All existing County policies apply to conduct on the Internet, especially those that deal with intellectual property protection, privacy, and misuse of county resources, sexual harassment, information and data security, and confidentiality. Montgomery County's facilities and computing resources must not be used knowingly to violate the laws and regulations of the United State or any other nation, or the laws and regulations of any state, city, province or other local jurisdiction in any way.

Unnecessary or unauthorized Internet usage takes away from work time. Unlawful Internet usage may also garner negative publicity and expose the County to significant legal liabilities; the Montgomery County must impose limits on Internet usage.

Increasing numbers of county employees have access to the Internet. County employees have stewardship responsibilities for public information. The open connection afforded by Internet access underscores the need for heightened awareness among county employees regarding prudent behavior as it pertains to information dissemination and access.

Employees releasing protected information to unauthorized sources will be subject to all penalties under the County's policies, procedures, State and Federal laws, county ordinances, etc.

## **Policy**

While in performance of work-related functions, while on the job, or while using county owned or county provided information processing resources, county employees are expected to use the Internet responsibly and professionally and shall make no intentional use of these services in an illegal, malicious, or obscene manner. County employees may make reasonable personal use of County owned or provided Internet resources as long as:

1. The direct measurable cost to the County or its citizens is none;
2. There is no negative impact on employee performance of duties;
3. The policy is applied equitably among all employees of the County;

When sending or forwarding e-mail over the Internet, county employees shall identify themselves clearly and accurately. Inappropriate messages by e-mail, fax, or other electronic means are prohibited.

County employees have a responsibility to make sure that all county information disseminated via the Internet is accurate. Employees shall provide in association with such information its source and the date at which it was current and an e-mail address allowing the recipient to contact the staff responsible for making the information available in its current form.

All files downloaded from a source external to Montgomery County must be scanned for viruses. This includes files obtained as e-mail attachments and by any other file transfer mechanism. It is the responsibility of county employees to prevent the introduction or propagation of viruses. Recommendation of virus scanning packages can be obtained from the Montgomery County Information Technology Department.

The Internet provides easy access to software distributed by companies on a trial basis. The free access does not indicate that the software is free or that it may be distributed freely. All applicable software copyright and licensing laws must be followed.

Employees with Internet access may not use County Internet facilities to download entertainment software or games, to play games against opponents over the Internet, or to use real-time audio for their personal pleasure. Employees may not use the County Internet facilities to download images or videos unless there is an explicit business related use for the material.

County employees shall not enter into contractual agreements via the Internet or make statements on the Internet that may be interpreted as contractual.

An internet user will be held accountable for any breach of confidentiality or security.

## **Enforcement**

As an employer, Montgomery County reserves the right to review e-mail transmissions and to inspect the contents of its computer property, such as disk drives, and to monitor systems. The County must ensure that this policy is honored and will perform periodic system audits for reviewing purposes. Violators are subject to disciplinary actions, including possible termination, and/or when applicable, criminal prosecution.

## **Recommended Review Frequency**

The recommended review frequency for this policy is every year. The review will be conducted by the Montgomery County Information Services Policy Committee and any revisions or recommendations must be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners.



**Purpose and Composition of the Montgomery County Information Services Committee:**

In order to provide security, a committee is hereby created that shall oversee this policy and any associated information services, protection procedures, electronic records, or data network policies.

**Authority & Membership**

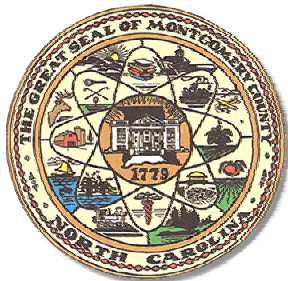
This committee is created and authorized by the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners and is empowered to carry out the purpose and duties listed below. Membership shall consist of the County Manager, Staff Attorney, the Director of Information Technology, two County Department Heads and a County Commissioner.

**Purpose & Duties:**

The purpose of this committee is to establish and enforce procedures as related to and consistent with this Internet Policy. The committee will also be responsible for establishing procedures and/or policies dealing with technology, information systems, and electronic records as needed. Procedures to be developed include but are not limited to the following:

- Establishing e-mail and Internet protocols
- Establishing network and system security protocols
- Establishing methods of ensuring data integrity
- Establishing guidelines and standards for Web site development, systems automation, and technological resource utilization.
- Establishing enforcement responsibility and procedures
- Defining avenues of appeal for enforcement decisions
- Developing a Strategic Technology Plan that promotes the coordination of technology advancement efforts between departments and agencies.
- Defining other procedures as may be deemed necessary to manage, secure, enforce, update, or monitor Internet access and other information processing resources.

Approved this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2005.



*William D. Maress*  
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William D. Maress, Chairman

**Attest:**

*Laura B. Morton*  
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Laura B. Morton, Clerk to the Board