

## 7.4 ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

**E-Mail and Voicemail Acceptable Use.** The County provides e-mail and voicemail systems for employees to communicate with one another and persons outside of the County. In order to protect the confidentiality of communications, each employee may be assigned a distinct password and security code to access his or her computer and telephone messages. These passwords must be provided to the Supervisor. All employees should be aware, however, that the County has the ability to access all e-mail and voicemail.

E-mail and other means of electronic communications are business tools to permit rapid and efficient communications with a large audience. The County systems are business systems, and not a personal communications network or bulletin board. Users of these tools should apply good judgment and common sense. All electronic communication should be conducted as if it were done in a public meeting following the rules of ethical conduct and non-discriminatory behavior.

Employees will be expected to take full responsibility for their electronic communications. All communications shall be made with the acknowledgment that there is minimal control over what the recipient does with it. In some situations, electronic communications have been used in legal proceedings.

In the event the County receives information that an employee is abusing the system or is sending harassing, damaging, or defamatory messages, an investigation will be conducted, and the employee will be informed at the beginning of the investigation. If any employee has abused the right to use e-mail, he or she may be disciplined in any manner consistent with Section 6.3 of this handbook. Use of the County's e-mail system, voicemail, and other computer facilities shall comply with all laws and regulations and shall exhibit the highest moral and ethical standards of business conduct.

**Monitoring of Electronic Mail and Data:** *All electronic mail messages and related data are the property of Sac county. The County reserves the right to access messages and related data whenever there is a legitimate purpose to do so or under the following circumstances:*

Upon the discontinuation of County employment for any reason, a user's mail and data may be accessed for the purpose of saving those messages and files that pertain to County business. This access will be granted only upon written notification from the Department Head/Elected Official to the IT Administrator.

- These files may be subject for transfer to another user if necessary to conduct County business;
- If required by law to do so;
- In the course of an audit or investigation triggered by indications of impropriety or as necessary to locate substantive information;
- When necessary to investigate a possible violation of a county policy or a breach of the security of the electronic mail system; and
- In the event there is reasonable suspicion that a user has committed or is committing a crime against the County or for which the County could be held liable.

Employees who are placed on a leave of absence, terminated, or laid off from employment with Sac county have no right to the contents of their electronic messages and are not allowed access to the electronic communication system.

**Disclosure of Mail Accessed by Monitoring:** *The contents of any / all electronic mail sent from or received through a Sac county system shall be subject to Open Records Law unless otherwise protected by law and may be disclosed without the permission of the End User. The following shall be the*

*procedure in which the IT Administrator delivers requested electronic mail documents to an individual making a specific request.*

If a request has been made for disclosure of an End User's County-owned electronic mail, the IT Administrator shall either print copies, or shall utilize technological means to obtain copies, of all mail requested. The timeframe for delivery of e-mails to an individual making a request shall be reasonable and follow the guidelines within the Open Records Law. The IT Administrator will contact the County Attorney if deemed necessary to review and redact the data.

**Retention of Electronic Mail Messages:** *This section of the policy is in regard to storing of e-mail messages and sets a guideline for cleaning up unnecessary messages.*

All e-mail and teams will be archived utilizing the County e-mail system. This system has a 2-year archive. All End User accounts have 99 Gb of storage space for e-mails. If the End User's e-mail account exceeds that limit, the End User will be asked to delete unneeded messages.

Use of the County's Internet facilities includes use of the County's domain name and as a result reflects upon the corporate image. The County's reputation is an important public asset. Illegal, unethical, or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated, and the employee(s) will be subject to discipline or termination.

**Acceptable Use:** This section establishes guidelines and standards for the use of technology equipment, software, data, electronic mail, social media and the Internet. These guidelines and standards must be understood and accepted by each End User who may utilize Sac county technological resources including, but not limited to, Sac county employees, vendors, and public citizens. Revisions to these guidelines and standards may be expected as new products and services are introduced and as the understanding of information processing and Sac county business practice evolves.

*Hardware:* Any physical technology equipment used for processing data or for data / voice communication including, but not limited to: Desktop PC's, Laptops, Smartphones / Cell phones, Desk Phones, Virtual Desktops, Servers, Networking equipment, Printers, iPads, tablet PC's, etc.

*Software:* Programs, programming languages, instructions, or routines which are used to perform work on a computer or other technology hardware.

*Data:* Information such as records, images, e-mail, or other textual material stored on or accessible through a computer whether that data resides on County hardware or is accessible through the Internet or other on-line services through the use of County hardware.

*Inappropriate Conduct:* Conduct which violates the County's Acceptable Usage Policy.

*IT Administrator:* Individual or department designated as being responsible for County-owned technology resources for the End User accessing County-owned hardware, software, or data.

The Sac County IT shall be the IT Administrator for all County departments.