

KITSAP COUNTY USE OF TECHNOLOGY POLICY

I. PURPOSE

To accomplish Kitsap County's public service mission, the County provides technology for use by County workforce members in the performance of County functions.

Technology provided by the County is County property, and its purpose is to facilitate and support County business. It is essential for workforce members to demonstrate proper stewardship of County resources and to maintain a responsible, effective work environment. Each user is responsible for using County technology in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

This policy applies to workforce members using technology owned by Kitsap County and is intended to ensure that the use of technology is consistent with County code and policies, all applicable laws, and individual's job responsibilities.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Confidential Information: Information that has been created or obtained under County governmental and proprietary authority and that, at the time this policy is applied, the County is prohibited by law from disclosing to the public or has a legal privilege not to disclose. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, unpublished details about projects, private data, protected health information, unreleased bid or financial information, personnel information, and other sensitive or classified information.
- B. Electronic Communication: Chat message, e-mail, text messages, voicemail, and the like. Includes attachments to and links in emails and messages.
- C. Hardware: Cameras, cellphones, desktop computers, disks, fax machines, handheld organizers, headsets, laptop computers, microphones, modems, pagers, personal digital assistants, photocopiers, portable drives, printers, projection equipment, recorders, routers, smartphones, tablets, telephones, televisions, two-way radios, and similar devices.
- D. Information Services (IS) Department: The County department responsible for technology information management and governance, system maintenance, and security.
- E. Internet: A global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols.
- F. Intranet: County's restricted communications network used to share County electronic information and resources with workforce members.
- G. Public Communications Manager: The Board of County Commissioners' designee responsible for overseeing the use of the County's communications.
- H. Wi-Fi: Wireless networking technology that is used to connect computers, tablets, smartphones, etc. to the internet. This includes secured and public access Wi-Fi.
- I. Software: A set of computer programs and associated documentation and data.

- J. **Technology:** Electronic communications, hardware, internet access, intranet, software, and Wi-Fi.
- K. **User:** Any workforce member using technology owned by Kitsap County.
- L. **Workforce Member:** Full-and part-time elected or appointed officials, members of boards and commissions, employees, affiliates, associates, interns, volunteers, and staff from third-party entities who provide service to Kitsap County.

III. USE OF COUNTY TECHNOLOGY

- A. **County Technology is for Business Use.** County technology may only be used in connection with matters that are reasonably related to County business and within the scope of employment, and as provided in this policy.
- B. **Assigned Technology.** County Technology assigned to a specific user(s) may only be used by the assigned user(s). Users shall not share login credentials or passwords associated with assigned County Technology.
- C. **Prohibited Uses.** Users are prohibited from using County technology in any manner that:
 1. Compromises the security or integrity of County property, information systems, or software, including bypassing security systems;
 2. Provides access to non-workforce members;
 3. Downloads software or starts cloud-based software subscriptions without specific authorization from the IS Department;
 4. Is likely to cause network congestion or negatively impact system performance, such as bandwidth intensive activities;
 5. Discusses, encourages, or constitutes illegal activity;
 6. Violates copyright or trademark laws;
 7. Promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, national origin, veteran status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or other protected class;
 8. Threatens or harasses any individual or entity;
 9. Creates, stores, views, sends, or receives material that is obscene, profane, or vulgar or sexual in nature or includes links to content that is sexual in nature;
 10. Misrepresents a workforce member's job, job title, job description, or position within the County;
 11. Improperly accesses or discloses sensitive or confidential information;
 12. Distributes misinformation or information that is misleading, distorted, or untrue;
 13. Accesses games, entertainment, shopping, or gambling;
 14. Streams television shows, movies, or music;
 15. Accesses personal accounts – such as personal email, social media, financial accounts, etc. unless in compliance with Section VI ; or
 16. Is inconsistent with any other section of this policy, other County policies, or County code.
- D. **Scope of Employment.** It is not a violation of this policy to use County technology in a manner otherwise prohibited by this policy when required to carry out employment duties such as criminal investigation and prosecution, court administration, providing legal advice, or responding to human resources or technology issues.
- E. **Business Purchases.** County technology may be used to make purchases for County business.

All purchases must adhere to County code and purchasing policies and procedures. Business purchases include business travel related expenses such as food and transportation.

- F. **Permitted Uses.** When appropriate, County technology may be used for the following:
1. Training and career development approved by the County;
 2. Membership or participation in professional associations that enhance job-related skills of County workforce members, so long as use for this purpose has been authorized in writing;
 3. County sponsored employment, health, safety, or diversity fairs or activities;
 4. Management of or access to County-provided or County-sponsored benefits, including health, deferred compensation, insurance, retirement, and the employee assistance program; and
 5. Searching and applying for County jobs, including taking an examination or participating in an interview.
- G. **Use of Technology for Charitable Purposes.** On the condition that prior approval of an employing official or department head has been sought and granted, County technology may be used for charitable activities that: (1) support the poor and infirm, (2) serve a fundamental County purpose, or (3) are supported by consideration flowing to the County. Charitable activities should align with the mission of the office or department.
- H. **Damage to County Technology.** Users are responsible for using County technology in a manner that protects the technology from damage. This does not include normal wear and tear. Any unauthorized deliberate action that damages or disrupts computing systems, network, or data, alters their normal performance, or causes them to malfunction or be unavailable, regardless of location or duration is prohibited. Incidents of damage or theft will be examined to determine whether loss resulted from employee gross negligence, intentional misuse, or violation of rules and procedures a user has agreed to follow.
- I. **Lost or Stolen Technology.** In the event of a lost or stolen hardware or other device of this type, that has or could provide access to County confidential information, the individual responsible for the equipment must IMMEDIATELY contact the Help Desk at (360) 337-5555 or email at: helpdesk@kitsap.gov. All other loss or theft should be promptly reported to the help desk and employing official.
- J. **Safety.** When using County issued cellphones, smartphones, or other portable devices while operating a motor vehicle users must comply with all applicable laws.
- K. **Harassment or Criminal Activity via County Technology.** Workforce members who believe that County technology is being used for harassment or criminal activity should follow these procedures:
1. Do not respond to any harassing electronic communications;
 2. Save any related electronic communications or evidence related to the harassment or illegal activity;
 3. Notify your supervisor, employing official, Human Resources Department, and/or appropriate designee; and
 4. In cases of criminal activity, notify the Sheriff's Office.

IV. PRIVACY, PUBLIC RECORDS, AND RECORDS RETENTION

- A. County technology is provided by the County to facilitate County communications and business.
- B. No one has a right to privacy in any material created, received, accessed, stored, or sent using County technology. This includes electronic communications and internet browsing history. The County reserves the right to monitor the use of all technology and to access, use, and disclose electronic communications, internet browsing history, and other electronic records at any time.
- C. **Personal Information.** Unless required for employment matters, users should not include personal information such as contact information, names and details of friends and family members, medical information, financial information, photographs, etc. when using County technology.
- D. Use of County technology is subject to the Public Records Act, RCW 42.56. If the County receives a public records request for records created, stored, accessed, sent, or received using County technology, then the County will produce all non-exempt records. The County has no obligation on behalf of a user to claim any exemption from disclosure under the Act. The County will not be liable to a user for releasing records in compliance with the Act or a court order.
- E. **Record Retention.** The County is responsible for managing and retaining records in accordance with record retention requirements established by the Washington Secretary of State and policies adopted by the County. To assist the County in meeting these duties and conserving public resources spent on record management and storage, users should limit the use of County technology to situations necessary for County business purposes.

For brief, transitory communications, users are encouraged to use chat messenger or telephone options. All electronic communications, regardless of type, must be retained until they meet their required retention period.

V. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- A. **Electronic Communications Decorum.** Electronic communications are a form of business communication. The County is a public agency and use of electronic communications reflects upon the County. As a result, communications must be in accordance with business decorum, and appropriate to the County's business setting. All electronic communications should adhere to professional writing standards.
- B. **Electronic Communications to All County Users.** Users may not send electronic communications to all County users except in the following circumstances:
 - 1. Emergencies involving public health, safety, or welfare, when immediate notification is needed;
 - 2. County-wide computer, network, or telephone system disruptions; or
 - 3. Messages pre-approved by an employing official and/or the Public Communications Manager.

- C. **Electronic Communication Access.** Electronic communications sent and received by users are associated with the department or office they work for. An existing or returning County user hired into a different department or office will not have access to electronic communications from their prior position. If appropriate, access to electronic communications associated with a prior position can be requested through the IS Department with approval from the user's previous employing official.

VI. **Personal Use of County Technology**

- A. Personal use of County technology must:
1. Not be inconsistent with Section (III)(B).
 2. Be brief in duration and frequency. Electronic communications shall not be used for consistent or ongoing personal communications;
 3. Result in little or no cost to the County;
 4. Not interfere with or impair the conduct of official County business.;
 5. Not be used for the purpose of conducting an outside business, in furtherance of private employment, or to realize a private financial gain;
 6. Not be used to support, promote the interests of, or solicit for an outside organization or group, except as discussed in Section III(F);
 7. Not be used for political purposes, election campaigning or to promote or oppose a ballot proposition;
 8. Not violate any other County policy;
 9. Not be used to purchase personal items; or
 10. Not be used for message boards related to personal accounts.
- B. County email addresses shall not be linked to personal social media or networking accounts or listservs, newsletters, or the like which are unrelated to County business and the user's scope of employment.

- VIII. Penalties.** The violation of this Technology Use Policy is regarded by Kitsap County as a serious offense and is subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as appropriate.¹

¹ See Kitsap County Personnel Manual, Chapter 11 and any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement.