
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33601**

BOARD POLICY – SECTION NUMBER 01.29.00.00:

**SUBJECT: USE OF COUNTY ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND
 TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS**

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 16, 2009

SUPERSEDES: NEW

PURPOSE AND POLICY

It is the policy of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (“BOCC”) that Commissioners’ Aides, and interns and volunteers working with the BOCC or individual Commissioner’s office (hereinafter “covered persons”) adhere to the guidelines below to ensure their acceptable use of County owned/leased electronic, computer and telecommunication devices and equipment, including access to and use of the internet and electronic mail (e-mail).

All County owned or leased electronic devices, telecommunication devices, wireless communication devices, internet, and County e-mail are to be used as business tools for reasons that are necessary for the accomplishment of a covered person’s duties and assignments. In certain circumstances, personal use of such devices may be permissible. Each covered person is responsible for ensuring he or she fully understands and complies with his or her Commissioner’s expectations with regard to the appropriate volume and nature of any personal use of the County’s internet, e-mail and other electronic and telecommunication devices and equipment. Any intern or volunteer working with the BOCC shall ensure he or she fully understands and complies with the Chairperson’s expectations with regard to the appropriate volume and nature of any personal use of the County’s internet, e-mail and other electronic and telecommunication devices and equipment.

Covered persons shall promptly reimburse the County for any personal use that results in costs or expenses to the County.

Covered persons must immediately report damaged, lost or stolen electronic or telecommunication devices to the Commissioner for whom they work (or, in the case of an intern or volunteer working for the BOCC, this report is to the Chairperson).

Should the County issue a GPS-capable electronic or telecommunication device to a covered person, the Commissioner and the covered person will discuss the appropriate use of the device prior to the covered person utilizing the device. In the case of an intern or volunteer working for the BOCC, this discussion is with the Chairperson.

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1. Definitions

- A. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to: desktop and laptop computer hardware and software; digital cameras, personal digital assistants (PDAs), electronic prepaid toll devices, GPS devices, printers, scanners, copiers, and any other electronic device approved and issued by the County to facilitate the delivery of services to customers.
- B. Telecommunication devices include, but are not limited to: cellular phones, two-way “walkie-talkies,” vehicle-mounted communication devices, pagers, facsimile machines, and any other device approved and issued by the County to facilitate communications.

2. Prohibited Use of the Internet and E-Mail

Covered persons are prohibited from accessing, sending, storing, displaying, downloading, uploading, blogging, instant messaging, or printing sensitive materials including, but not limited to, sexually explicit materials or materials that include inappropriate language, profanity, obscenity or defamatory statements. Covered persons are prohibited from using the internet and e-mail to engage in illegal activities.

Covered persons shall not use the e-mail system to send or receive the following classifications of information:

- Confidential/proprietary information or data to persons within or outside of the County
- Sensitive information including protected health information and Social Security Numbers
- Content that may constitute harassment or be considered obscene, defamatory or physically threatening
- Any offensive or disruptive messages including illegal activity, sexual implications or pornography
- Copyrighted materials or proprietary information, or similar materials without prior authorization

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3. Monitoring of Internet and E-Mail

The e-mail system is property of Hillsborough County. All messages composed, sent, or received on the e-mail system are and remain the property of the County. Such e-mails are not the private property of any covered person and e-mail confidentiality should not be assumed. Moreover, all e-mails are presumed to be subject to disclosure under Florida Statute §119.01, upon public records request. Covered persons shall not attempt to gain access to or use another covered person's e-mail account without the latter's permission.

Covered persons shall expect that authorized County personnel may access their internet and e-mail activity at any time. In addition, the County reserves the right to, without the permission of the covered person, review and audit all activity, including intercepting, accessing and disclosing all messages created, received or sent for any purpose. The covered person has no legitimate or reasonable expectation of privacy in the access, storage, recovery, and/or use of any record created by any County supplied device, including but not limited to, internet and e-mail activity. Even when a message is erased, it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. By accessing and/or using any County supplied device, such as internet or e-mail, the covered person indicates the his or her acknowledgment, acceptance, and understanding of the general directives, expectations, and requirements governing access and use.

4. Discipline

Commissioner's Aides who access or use the internet or e-mail in violation of this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment. Interns or volunteers of the BOCC or an individual Commissioner's office who access or use the internet or e-mail in violation of this policy are subject to dismissal from service to Hillsborough County.

Approved By: Board of County Commissioners
Approval Date: December 16, 2009