

TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP POLICY MANUAL

9.0 COMPUTER, EMAIL, CELL PHONES, INTERNET, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

9.1 Purpose

This Computer, Email, Cell Phones, Internet, and Social Media policy ("Policy") establishes the requirements to ensure proper use of the Township's computers, email, cell phone resources, internet and social media. The Policy describes the Township's rules with regard to internet access and disclosure of mail messages sent or received by Township employees with the use of the Township's email system.

This Policy is intended for all employees, Board members, appointees, or volunteers. For convenience, the term employees will represent all members of that group within this policy.

9.2 Policy – Computers and Email

- A. Computers used by employees in the workplace are the property of the Township and, as such, they, and electronically stored data, may be inspected at any time without notice. Employees shall not access the Township's information technology system except in the performance of their employment duties or for limited personal use. In addition, no download of any data or software into a Township-owned computer or server shall be accomplished without prior approval of the employee's supervisor.

Township business by email, text messaging, tweeting, etc., is subject to FOIA disclosure. Additionally, officials are required to retain copies of such correspondence as an official public record under FOIA. FOIA does not exempt those using private computers, phones etc., from its requirements; thus, such public records must be retained by Township officials in accordance with a properly approved retention and disposal schedule.

Any use of the Township's information technology system in violation of any of the prohibited uses described herein is prohibited and will subject the Employee to discipline.

- B. The Township respects the individual privacy of its employees. However, employee privacy does not extend to the employee's work-related conduct or the use of Township-provided equipment or supplies. The following guidelines may affect employee privacy in the workplace.
 - **SECURITY & LEGAL PRECAUTIONS** - The electronic mail system has been installed by the Township to facilitate business communications. Although each employee may have an individual

password to access this system, it belongs to the Township and the contents of the email communications are accessible at all times by Township administration for any business purpose. These systems may be subject to periodic unannounced inspection, and should be treated like any other shared filing system. All system password or encryption keys must be available to the Township Supervisor and Clerk.

- All messages created, sent, or retrieved over the Township's email/internet are the property of the Township and all such messages are public information. The Township reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the Township's email/internet system. Employees should not assume electronic communications are totally private and should transmit highly confidential data in other ways.
- Email may be subpoenaed for use in court. In addition, email messages may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). When writing something using email, assume the message may be read by third parties. Therefore, carefully consider messages and use good judgement in message content. A message with statements that can be interpreted as harassing, biased or discriminatory may subject the Township to civil penalties or damages.
- The Township reserves the right to block any and all Internet sites as necessary or appropriate. Some sites may be blocked due to objectionable content, other sites may be blocked due to network concerns (some sites cause the use of huge blocks of network resources).
- Employees are prohibited from the unauthorized use of the passwords and encryption keys of other employees to gain access to other employee's email messages.

C. Prohibited Uses: Although it is impossible to list all non-permitted uses, the following is a non-exclusive list of subjects expressly prohibited and violators are subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including employment termination:

- Conduct or participate in any actions which are illegal by Township, County, State or Federal law, statute or regulation, and/or copyright;
- Threaten or harass others;
- Unlawful discrimination based upon color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, family status, sexual orientation, marital status, physical or mental limitation, or gender identity/expression or genetic information, or any legal protected status.
- Purposely view, display, store or transmit any obscene material;

- Conduct commercial or private/personal business enterprises;
- Promote private businesses, product advertisement or political lobbying for candidates;
- Send unauthorized bulk or random messages or chain letters;
- Solicit for organizations that are unrelated to the Township’s mission or purpose;
- Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to a remote site;
- Destroy or attempt to destroy the integrity of computer-based information;
- Purposely install or invoke a computer virus or other disruptive mechanism;
- Alter system files or configuration to disrupt computer or network functions;
- Seek or gain unauthorized access to network resources;
- Seek or gain unauthorized access to resources on the Internet;
- Place bets or gamble on sporting events or lotteries;
- Attempt to breach security mechanisms.
- Distributing by blind-copy (bcc) emails and other messaging to non-primary recipients of the original email or message.
- Blind-copy “email blasts” to undisclosed recipients.

9.3 Policy – Cellphones and Vehicles

Cell phone usage while operating Township equipment and vehicles shall be limited to those occasions for Township business and whereby safe operation of said equipment or vehicle is not compromised and in accordance with the Michigan Vehicle Code and all other laws concerning texting and cell phone usage. Use of cell phones for personal use shall be of a limited duration or on work breaktime.

9.4 Policy – Internet and Social Media

The Township’s website: <https://www.torchlaketownship.org/>, is recognized as the Township’s primary source for online communication and information.

The Township prohibits:

- Employees from accessing nonwork-related internet sites and social media sites while on work time or on equipment provided by the Township, unless it is work related as authorized by a supervisor or consistent with our policies.
- Employees from use of Township email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
- Employees from media and social media interviews on behalf of the Township without first contacting the Township Supervisor. All media inquiries should be directed to the Township Supervisor. If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact your supervisor or the Township Supervisor.

- Employees from communicating as representing the Township on social media platforms. Township staff shall not engage, comment or post using their personal accounts and claim or otherwise indicate they are communicating officially on behalf of the Township or representing the Township with their comments. Township staff may not represent themselves as formally speaking for the Township unless identified previously by the Township Supervisor as official spokespeople. Identified Township spokespeople shall conduct themselves on social media only within the scope defined herein and in compliance with all Township policies, practices, and user agreements and guidelines.

Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media sites. The Township is not responsible for the personal content of employees' social media sites. Employees should consider:

- Published content may be public for a long time.
- Regardless of position, residents of the Township are aware of your association with the Township in online social networks.
- If an employee chooses to identify themselves as a Township employee, they should ensure their profile and related content is consistent with how they wish to present themselves with colleagues and citizens.
- Regardless of publication type, employees should make it clear that what they say is representative of their views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of the Township .
- Unless an employee is specifically authorized to speak on behalf of the Township, they should consider including the following disclaimer on personal blogs or social media in which they identify themselves as a Township employee: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the Township's positions, strategies or opinions."

Social media activities that are not protected by the First Amendment and that violate this or any other Township policy will be subject to investigation and appropriate action, including disciplinary measures including termination, as determined by the Township.

Adopted _____
Torch Lake Township
Board of Trustees