TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH
PERSONNEL POLICY

POLICY 211 LAST REVISED 8/1/08

SUBJECT: ELECTRONIC MAIL POLICY

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines, consistent with the Town's Electronic Communications Usage Policy, for the use of electronic mail on the Town of Hillsborough's computer systems.

STATEMENT OF POLICY:

All electronic mail (email) transmitted messages are Town records and are the property of the Town.

The Town reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over its email system(s) for any purpose.

Email transmissions are not confidential; therefore, employees shall have no expectation of privacy in anything that is sent over the email network.

Provisions

1. Except as noted below, all messages transmitted over the email system will be Town business activities and contain information essential to its employees for the accomplishment of Town business, administration or practices.
2. Incidental and occasional personal use of the email system for essential brief personal matters that cannot be handled during non-working hours is permitted. However, these messages are subject to the access and disclosure statement set forth in the policy above. Employees are expected to keep such personal use to a minimum.
3. Users of email are responsible for the management of their mailbox and associated folders.
4. All users must utilize a password and provide the Town Administrator with any personal passwords and notify the Administrator of any changes when made.
5. Email should not be used for network wide or broadcast purposes unless the message is of interest to all users.
6. The Town has access to any and all electronic mail in the email system and may exercise that access at any time, for any reason, including:
    a. Investigation of actual or suspected impropriety or violation of Town policy,

b. Legal requirements,
c. Investigation of actual or suspected criminal activities,
d. Breach of electronic mail security,
e. To locate substantive information that is not more readily available by some other means, or
f. For the performance of routine maintenance.

7. The Town may disclose the contents of electronic mail within or outside the Town without employee permission or knowledge.
8. The Town has unlimited access to protect the system security or the Town's property rights.

Records Management

Email generates correspondence and other records which may be recognized as official records in need of protection/retention in accordance with the California Public Records Act and other statutes. Emails which become official records are to be printed out for filing. It is the responsibility of staff to determine when an email is an official record and is covered by the scope of their Department's records retention schedule.

Confidentiality

1. Employees should understand that confidentiality is not provided within the email system, as all communications transmitted are the property of the Town. The email system is not appropriate for confidential communications. It would not be appropriate for a supervisor to use email to issue a written reprimand, warning, etc. It also would not be appropriate for an employee to respond back to the supervisor, should a disciplinary action occur, using email.) Further inappropriate uses are any message communication of a personal nature between employees and messages advising on a personnel matter, etc.
2. It is a violation of this policy for any employee, including system administrators, supervisors or programmers to use the email and computer systems for purposes of satisfying idle curiosity about the affairs of others, with no substantial business purpose for obtaining access to the files or communications of others.
3. In certain approved situations, employees may receive confidential work related emails from outside parties, i.e. Police Officers receiving confidential information from the federal government. In such situations, employees must continue to maintain the confidentiality of that information and should not disclose it to or make it available to anyone who is not authorized to review or receive such information. If you have a question, please contact Human Resources or your supervisor.

Etiquette

Employees should use common sense and manners when composing email messages. Insulting, offensive, disrespectful, demeaning or sexually suggestive language will not be tolerated. Harassment in any form, obscenities, any

representation of obscenities or sexual, religious or ethnic slurs will not be tolerated. Sending a copy of these types of offensive email to a separate party will not be tolerated. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for violations of the Town email policy.

Training
Training on email will be provided as access to the network becomes available. Employees will be provided an opportunity to attend a workshop or other arrangement for training may be provided. It is the responsibility of the employee to be properly trained on the use of email.

Typical Use

1. Appropriate uses of email would be for day-to-day activity messages within the same department/division or notices where timely formal reply is not needed from the recipient. An example would be reminding employees of an upcoming training class schedule and requesting an attendance response.
2. Inappropriate uses are when information needs to be communicated individually to every Town employee with an address, or if a quick response is needed. Many employees may not be able to check their email on a frequent basis.
3. The Town cannot assist employees with any private profit making activity. Therefore, private, for sale and want ads will not be allowed.
4. Messages of a political nature are prohibited. (See Town political activity policy for additional information.)
5. Messages of a religious nature or the promoting or opposing of religious beliefs will not be allowed.

Permanence
Employees should be aware that even when an email is deleted, it may be retrieved by various technical means.

Unless approved in writing by the City Manager, employees should not use personal email, personal cell phones or personal digital assistants to conduct any Town business. The Town may need access to information stored on those devices or with the third-party service provider for the Town's legitimate business purposes. These employees, therefore, should understand that the Town may request that the employee provide written consent to access communications stored on the personal communication device or for the third-party service provider to disclose to the Town the content of stored communications concerning the Town's business. An employee's refusal to comply with the Town's request for such consent may result in discipline up through and including termination. Employees are required to cooperate with the Town in obtaining such consent as well as in the Town's obtaining access to the stored communications.

Communications by employees through any third-party electronic communications service for which the Town is the subscriber or for which it pays the subscription directly or through reimbursement to the employee are subject to all Town policies,

including this policy.

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