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**USE OF COUNTY COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES, E-MAIL, INTERNET,
AND OTHER COMMUNICATION RESOURCES
Policy 420**

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USE OF COUNTY COMPUTERS, CELL PHONES, E-MAIL, INTERNET, AND OTHER COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

.1 PURPOSE

County Officials and County employees are obligated to conserve and protect County resources for the benefit of the public interest, rather than their private interests. Responsibility and accountability for the appropriate use of County resources ultimately rests with the individual County Official or County employee who uses County resources or who authorizes such use. The intention of the following policies is to preserve and enhance the integrity of those resources. The County may require that individuals sign written acknowledgement of all or part of this policy as a condition of employment and/or prior to use of these resources.

.2 DEFINITIONS

"County Resources" include electronic and communications equipment, software, and systems, including but not limited to computers, computer networks, software, copiers, scanners, printers, other computer peripherals, telephones, cellular phones, the SCAN system, radios, applications such as the internet, e-mail, office systems, and other equipment or other property or resources under the official's or employee's official control or direction or in his or her custody or to which he or she has access.

.4 GENERAL PROVISIONS

4.1 Prohibition against Use of County Resources for Personal Use

No County Official or County employee may use County resources for personal benefit or gain of the official, employee, or any other person. Except as provided in this policy, a County Official or employee may not make private use of County resources and then reimburse the County so there is no actual cost to the County.

4.2 Exceptions to Personal Use

This prohibition does not apply to the use of County resources to benefit another person if such use is consistent with the official or employee's official duties.

Notwithstanding the prohibition against use of County resources for personal benefit set forth in this policy, a County Official or employee may make occasional but limited use of County resources for their personal benefit, if:

- a. There is no cost to the County or the cost to the County is *de minimis*;
- b. The use of County resources does not interfere with the performance of the official or employee's duties, and does not obligate other employees to use County resources;

- c. The use is occasional, brief in duration, and does not disrupt or distract from the conduct of County business, including volume or frequency; and
- d. The use does not compromise the security or integrity of County information or software.

Occasional, minor use of photocopiers, fax machines, etc. is permitted provided the employee receives prior permission from the County Official and pays for use at the rate established in the County's Consolidated Fee Schedule.

A County Official may authorize personal use of County resources if they determine that such use promotes organizational effectiveness or enhances the job-related skills of the County Official or employee using such resources.

A County Official may authorize use of County resources to support, promote, or solicit for an outside charitable or community-based organization or group if the use of County resources is de minimis.

A County Official may designate bulletin boards, either electronic or physical, which are authorized for personal use.

The Information Technology Department may authorize County-owned software to be installed on a personally owned computer upon request by a County Official; provided, the installation does not violate the software license. The Information Technology Department may not provide support for installation or use of County-owned software on a personally owned computer and the County assumes no liability for such installation or use.

4.3 Absolute Prohibitions

Notwithstanding the exceptions provided herein, the following personal uses of County resources are absolutely prohibited:

- a. Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business of the County Official, employee, or a relative or acquaintance of the Official or employee, other than use which is consistent with the Official's or employee's official duties.
- b. Any campaign or political use, unless such use has been determined not a violation of RCW 42.17.130 and .190 by the Clallam County Prosecuting Attorney, Washington State Attorney General, or Washington Public Disclosure Commission, or as otherwise authorized by law.
- c. Commercial uses such as advertising or selling, whether for personal or business purposes, other than authorized charitable or community-based promotions as designated in this policy. Use of bulletin boards designed for employee use as authorized in paragraph 4.2.E of this policy shall not be considered a violation of this prohibition.

- d. Any use for private benefit or gain, including use of County contracts with vendors for the purchase of goods or services.
- e. Any illegal activity, including any use of the internet, software, or any other property or resource that violates copyright laws.

4.4 County Officials May Implement More Restrictive Policies

Nothing in this policy is intended to limit the ability of a County Official to adopt policies for their offices or departments that are more restrictive than the prohibitions provided herein.

4.5 No Expectation of Privacy

The County reserves the right to monitor the activities of all County Officials' and employees' County computers, e-mail, Internet, fax, cell phones, and other electronic and communications systems. Users shall have no expectation of privacy when using County resources. Such records may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act as codified or hereinafter amended or may be disclosed for audit or other legitimate County operational or management purposes. Any records created while conducting County business using personally owned communications devices may also be subject to disclosure.

4.6 Violations – Penalty

Violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

5 SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING COMPUTER ACCOUNTS

Users are responsible for the security of electronically stored information (data) to which accounts assigned to the user have been given permission to use. All users given permission to access data must act in a manner to protect said data from loss, unauthorized alteration, and unauthorized use. Unauthorized use of a County computer account is prohibited.

5.1 Assignment of Computer Accounts

Computer accounts are assigned to individual County employees for their exclusive use. Users are responsible for all activities conducted with accounts assigned to them. Shared computer accounts for specialized purposes, and with limited access to data, may be authorized by the Information Technology Department. Such shared accounts may also be exempted from password standards and access control requirements if authorized by the Information Technology Department.

5.2 Passwords

Passwords are to be kept secret except in the case of authorized shared accounts. Each user is responsible to maintain the secrecy of the passwords for accounts assigned to them. To maintain password integrity, the following standard must be followed.

- a. Passwords for accounts assigned to individuals may not be shared.
- b. A password must be changed if it is suspected or known that someone else knows the password.
- c. The Information Technology Department may specify mandatory password standards that may include, but may not be limited to, length, content, and case restrictions, as well as requirements for periodic password change.

It is a violation of policy to allow others to obtain or use a password assigned to the user. If the user has knowledge that another person knows or is using their password, it is their responsibility to immediately change it and to report it to the Information Technology Department.

5.3 Access Control

User account and passwords are used to control access to County data resources based on an individual employee's need to access specific data. Users are responsible for data accessed, transmitted, copied, deleted, etc. done using their computer account.

To prevent unauthorized use, all users should log off of, or lock access to, all County computers and systems before leaving said computers or systems unattended.

Data will not be copied or transmitted without the same access restrictions as those placed on the original data. This provision is not intended to restrict distribution of data resulting from public disclosure requests or the authorized release of information by the County.

5.4 Exceptions for Information Technology Staff and Other Authorized Individuals

Information Technology Staff and other authorized individuals may, by nature of assigned duties and in support of authorized activities, be exempt from any or all of these provisions regarding computer accounts. Exceptions shall be authorized by the Director of the Information Technology Department.

6 SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING ELECTRONIC MAIL/BULLETIN BOARD

Electronic mail is an integral part of Clallam County communications. It is the policy of Clallam County to encourage the responsible use of electronic mail whether internally or externally generated or viewed. This policy is meant to make all users aware of the risks associated with

using electronic mail and to inform them of Clallam County's policy regarding such use. This policy applies to the electronic version of the messages and any paper or printed copies of the messages.

6.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of Clallam County's electronic mail system is to facilitate the timely and efficient conduct of County business. The system is also provided to encourage and facilitate the free exchange of business-related communications and ideas between employees.

6.2 Right of Inspection

The electronic mail system is intended for business purposes. Electronic mail communications constitute public records and the County has the right to access or monitor messages for work-related purposes, security, or to respond to public record requests. All messages should be composed with the expectation that they are public. Users shall have no expectation of privacy in e-mail messages, whether they are business related or an allowed personal use as provided herein. Use of electronic mail shall be considered consent to County Officials, managers, and other employees to inspect, use, or disclose any electronic mail or other electronic communications and/or data without further notice.

6.3 Prohibition of Inappropriate Message Content

Electronic mail should be businesslike, courteous, and civil. All Clallam County policies, including policies prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment, shall apply to use of e-mail. E-mail shall not be used for the expression of unlawful or discriminatory ill will or bias against individuals or groups, offensive material such as obscenity, vulgarity, or profanity, or other non-businesslike material. Sexually explicit material, cursing, and name-calling are expressly prohibited.

6.4 Forwarding of Electronic Mail

A user forwarding a message, which originates from someone else, may not make changes to that message without clearly disclosing the exact nature of the changes and the identity of the person who made the changes.

Messages received from the Prosecuting Attorney or deputies, or private attorneys acting on behalf of the County, its officers or employees, may be privileged communications and therefore, confidential, and these messages shall not be forwarded to non-County persons without the prior approval of the author.

6.5 Misdelivered Messages

If an electronic mail message comes to a user by mistake, the user should stop reading as soon as they realize the message was not meant for them and notify the sender or system administrator immediately.

6.6 User's Responsibility for Security

Users are responsible for the security of their electronic mail account password and any electronic mail that is sent via a user account. To protect a user account against unauthorized use, the following precautions should be taken:

- a. Log off from, or lock access to, the County computer before leaving it unattended. If user id logon is left open, and someone else uses it, it will appear as if user sent the message and user will be held accountable.
- b. Do not give out passwords. Users are responsible for messages sent via user account. Correspondingly, do not use or tamper with someone else's account without his/her knowledge and consent. Unauthorized use of an electronic mail account is in violation of this policy.

6.7 Use of Non-County Email Accounts

Non-County email accounts (like AOL, MSN, Yahoo!, or OlyPen) may not be used to conduct County business unless approved in advance by the Information Technology Department. All County employees are, at the request of their management, issued County email accounts and Internet addresses.

6.8 Transmission of Confidential Information

Confidential material must not be sent via electronic mail. Electronic mail messages may be intercepted, viewed, and used for non-approved purposes, especially when corresponding via the Internet, a medium over which the County has no control.

6.9 Using E-Mail for Mass Mailing

Users are encouraged to establish distribution lists in their contacts for multiple users to which they communicate regularly. The county's e-mail system is not, however, intended to be used for general mass mailings to all County employees; certain employees may not have e-mail accounts. In addition, mass mailings that contain attachments utilize a large amount of disk space. The County uses other electronic publications to communicate information that are more efficient and cost effective.

6.10 Use of County Employee Bulletin Board

The County may designate an electronic bulletin board on which County employees may place non-business-related information. The rules of conduct contained in section 6.3 apply to the use of the bulletin board. The County, at its sole discretion may promulgate further rules and restrictions on use of this County resource.

.7 SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING INTERNET WEB SITE ACCESS

It is the policy of Clallam County to encourage effective and efficient use of all County equipment for completion of County business. This includes use of the Internet for County employees to provide information to County residents, businesses, and other governmental agencies to search for information, and for information exchange.

7.1 Certain Use of Internet Prohibited

The following are specific examples of prohibited activities/access. This policy applies to use of any Internet or Intranet access system including but not limited to the County's network, the County's wireless access system (while on duty and/or using County-owned equipment), specific accounts set up at remote sites, or other County-owned or funded access. The County reserves the right to discipline and to remove Internet access for any employee for violation of this policy after contacting the applicable County Official.

- a. Use of County equipment to access pornographic web sites is prohibited at all times, except by law enforcement personnel in the conduct of their official duties and with the express permission of the Sheriff or Prosecuting Attorney.
- b. Use of the County Internet access to buy or sell merchandise through online auction services such as e-Bay, auctions.yahoo.com, etc, not a County sale or purchase, is expressly prohibited. This prohibition includes but is not exclusive to bidding on items, responding to bidders or buyers messages, receiving bidding notifications or alerts, and/or accessing Paypal or other buyer or seller accounts.
- c. Use of "instant messaging" software is prohibited unless permission is granted by the Director of Information Technology, pursuant to a written request based on a business necessity.

7.2 Monitoring and Reporting of Internet Use

It is the responsibility of the County Official to monitor and audit Internet web use within their department. Much like the County telephone system, there is the potential for employee abuse of the system. Information Technology may monitor and record user access to Internet sites and provide the County Official with information that can be used to track access to all Internet sites as required or requested to enforce County or department policy.

7.3 Downloading Files

The possibility of downloading a file with a computer virus is great and care must be taken not to contaminate any computers in the County. Files copied from an Internet site, or any other outside source, must be scanned by virus checking software prior to being used on a County computer. Information Technology shall make options available for virus checking of copied files.

7.4 Distributing Files

Caution should be used with distribution of County files via the Internet. Files distributed through the Internet have the possibility of being intercepted by others and used against the County's interest. Files are not to be distributed through the Internet without the express consent of the employee's County Official.

.8 REMOTE ACCESS TO COUNTY SYSTEMS

Remote access to certain County systems, applications, and data is maintained for selected employees. County remote access systems require a high level of application and user maintenance as well as monitoring. In addition, they significantly increase the security risks associated with outside access to applications and data. Remote access systems are therefore restricted only to those County Officials and employees who show a demonstrated necessity to access data or applications while away from County facilities and ONLY for County business. Remote access will not be granted for convenience. Users who do not utilize remote access systems may be removed as users. Use of remote access for other than official business will result in immediate removal as a user and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

8.1 Authorization Required

Prior to use by any County Official or employee, the appropriate County Official must submit a written request to the Information Technology Director identifying the user and stating what business necessity exists requiring the potential user to utilize remote access. The Information Technology Director will grant or deny the request. Appeals of the Information Technology Director's decision will be directed to the Administrator. Permission will be based on demonstrated need and subject to the criteria listed below.

County Officials, managers, and supervisors must be aware that providing remote access to County systems has the potential to result in overtime payments. Time spent accessing data or e-mail remotely is considered compensated time for employees subject to FLSA rules. County Officials and employees are required to comply with overtime policies contained in Policy 220.

8.2 Internet Service Provider Requires Approval

It is the policy of the County that it does not provide or pay for Internet access on home or County-owned computers. Exceptions will be approved by the Information Technology Director and/or the Administrator. Employees with remote access who travel should utilize Internet access through their lodging facility or other means. Any purchase of an ISP to be paid for from County funds must be previously approved.

8.3 Web Based E-Mail (WebMail)

The County maintains a WebMail system that allows access to the County e-mail system. The system may be authorized to employees who are required to access and respond to their e-mail while on leave and traveling.

8.4 Remote Access Services (RAS)

RAS connections are maintained by the County and allow users to access their County workstation and certain County applications. RAS connections will be limited only to employees who are required to access County applications other than e-mail from remote locations.

.10 SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING CELLULAR TELEPHONES

The effective management and application of information technology (including cellular telephones) improves the quality of service delivered to Clallam County citizens, the productivity of the County workforce, and the general cost effectiveness of the County operation. The County's use of cellular telephones is increasing as employees are asked to do more with less. Cellular technology provides assistance with disaster recovery, and offers portable alternatives for immediate communication, enabling time and distance to be managed more effectively. Violation of the County policy on cellular phone use is considered a serious offense.

10.1 Use of Alternatives/Stipend for Use of Personal Cellular Phone

If it has been determined by the County Official, on a case-by-case basis, that an employee needs to have a County-owned cellular phone for County-business purposes, the employee may choose to receive a County-owned cellular phone and adhere to all required audit and use procedures detailed in this policy or may elect to receive a stipend of \$10 per month from the County for the occasional usage of their personal cellular phone for County-business purposes.

10.2 Acquisition

Cellular telephones are to be acquired following the County's purchasing policies and procedures. Cellular phones intended for personal use shall not be purchased under the name of or associated with Clallam County's accounts. The following factors shall be considered in all cellular telephone acquisitions:

- a. Cellular usage costs compared to alternative communication costs
- b. Level of employee need and usage
- c. Departmental authorization of employee use

Cellular providers offer a number of calling plans, some with blocks of time assigned as part of a monthly flat rate. While this type of plan often has a lower per minute rate, purchase of flat rate plans for employees with limited use can increase the overall cost of the phone. County Officials are responsible to ensure that appropriate calling plans are purchased for the phone use anticipated by the employee.

County Officials are responsible to review the purchase of each acquisition of a replacement phone on an account. Cellular phones are constantly being offered with new features, smaller size, etc., most of which are not necessary for effective operation of basic functions. Replacement phones should only be purchased when a phone is damaged, or a function is offered that is a business necessity.

10.3 Inventory and Assignment of Responsibility Required

County Officials are responsible to ensure that all County-owned cellular equipment is inventoried by the respective departments and a current, accurate inventory is maintained. Responsibility for every County-owned cell phone shall be assigned to a County Employee whenever possible. The County employee assigned the phone shall be responsible for use that occurs on the phone, review of bills, and payment for personal use. In the case of cellular phones routinely used by more than one employee (i.e. mounted in pool vehicle), County Officials shall closely monitor use, and procedures in section 10.6 shall apply.

10.4 Use of Cellular Phones

Cellular phones provided by the County are intended to be used for County business. Except as allowed in this policy, employees are discouraged from using County-owned cellular phones for personal use and must never use them for private business or political purposes.

Use of County cellular phones for illegal, unethical, or sexual purposes or that interferes with or affects the ability of the employee to perform their duties is expressly prohibited. For all personal use (calls made and received), the employee is required to pay the County the full cost of such calls at the per minute rate, plus taxes, even if the call is part of "free airtime" as part of a block rate calling plan that shows no per minute cost

for the call. Roaming and long distance charges for personal calls shall also be paid. An infrequent or occasional call, short in duration that does not interfere with the performance of official duties and which results in little or no cost to the County, is an allowable "de minimis" use of County resources and need not be reimbursed.

This section is expressly intended as an exception to the use-then-reimbursement prohibition of paragraph 4.1 of this policy if use complies with this policy and payment for personal use has been made and is up to date.

10.6 Personal Use of Shared Cellular Phones

When a County-owned cellular phone is shared by more than one employee (i.e. cell phone installed in pool vehicle), all employees who make or receive personal calls on such phones shall make a log of such calls including the date, cellular telephone number, and inbound/outbound telephone number or other information to identify the caller or called party. Such employees shall assist in reconciling cellular phone bills in accordance with this policy and departmental procedures.

10.7 Procedures for Payment of Personal Use Required

County Officials shall maintain internal department procedures to provide a method for employees with assigned cellular phones or who share cell phones, to review their personal use and reimburse the County for it. County Officials are responsible to monitor use of County cellular phones and to ensure that employees are paying for personal use.

Employees with assigned cellular phones are required to review every monthly bill for their assigned phone, even if no personal calls were made that month, pay for personal calls made or received, if any, and maintain a record of such payment for the current year and the past year. Payment must be made no later than the end of the payroll period in which the billing is received. Proper documentation to be maintained includes a copy of the bill on which personal calls are highlighted, the number of personal calls and minutes used are noted, and the payment and payment date is noted. A receipt for payment from the County must also be attached. All records must be maintained, and available for audit, for the current year plus the past calendar year. The "per minute" rate is calculated by dividing the monthly basic rate, including taxes, by the number of minutes included in the basic rate.

Failure to review the bill and make monthly payment is a violation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the employee to obtain and review the monthly bill. Failure to receive a copy of the bill will not be accepted as a justification to avoid this responsibility.

10.8 Use of County-owned Cellular Phones outside the Workplace

Unless required by normal job duties to be available by cellular phone 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and so authorized by the appropriate County Official to do so, employees shall not carry or use a County-owned cellular phone while not on regular duty or in "on-call" status. County Officials may authorize exceptions to this policy for short periods of time due to special circumstances such as disasters, etc. It is not intended that persons in those positions so designated be required to carry a County-owned cell phone in addition to a personal one. As such, personal is not restricted, however, payment is still required in accordance with this policy.

10.9 Audits – Authority to Withhold Personal Charges from Pay

Clallam County reserves the right to audit all County-owned cellular telephones and their use, which will include, but may not be limited to, a review of the monthly billing by the employee's supervisor and review of the employee's log. Employees in such circumstances are required to assist the management to differentiate between business-related and personal calls and to remit the full amount owed for personal calls within ten days of first notification by the department. Before being issued a County cell phone, or in order to keep a cell phone issued prior to adoption of this policy, the employee shall sign a consent to withhold personal charges from the employee's pay if personal charges are not reimbursed voluntarily and timely as provided in this policy.

.11 SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING COUNTY MAIL

County mail is for business use. Costs are attributable to the delivery and sorting of County mail. Employees will not use the County's address for personal business or to receive personal mail.

County Officials and employees will not use the County's envelopes, mail meter, or County-owned stamps, or other mail supplies to package or mail personal mail. Employees may not drop personal mail into department outgoing mail repositories.

.12 IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall be effective immediately upon adoption and shall supersede all policies previously adopted by the County Commissioners with regard to use of County resources.

.13 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The questions and answers below are intended to guide employees in topics where questions are often asked. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of issues, topics, or answers. The information provided below is enforceable as a part of this policy.

- ***What does "private benefit or gain" mean?***

A private benefit or gain can range from avoiding a cost or expense to supporting your outside business or paying a discounted government rate for a personal phone call. Many uses don't appear to have a cost to the County but still may result in a private gain. For example, the cost of using a County computer to access the internet may be de minimis but using the resource to trade your stock portfolio would be use for private gain.

- ***We all have telephones in our work areas. Are there examples of abuse?***

County telephones, like any other resource can be abused. Employees must minimize personal use of telephones to infrequent calls of short duration, particularly if not on break or meal period. Examples of abuse might include repeated personal calls, calls that are not kept short, calls that interfere with the employees work product, calls that disturb the work of others, and calls that can be overheard by the public.

- ***If I use a County resource, can't I just reimburse my department for the use?***

No. Except for the limited allowances listed in this policy, reimbursing the County for a personal use is not allowed. Reimbursing for a personal use may result in a personal benefit and may impose significant administrative burdens on the County. Allowing reimbursement also creates the misperception that personal use is OK as long as we pay for it. Even allowable personal use should be the exception, not the rule.

- ***Can I play games on my computer during lunch and break times?***

Only if the game was preloaded on your computer as part of the manufacturer's operating system or as part of the County's preload. Use of downloaded, separately installed or interactive games is not allowed. Downloaded and interactive games have the potential to undermine the security of County information and systems.

- ***Can I check my personal e-mail account from my County computer, on County time, or on my breaks?***

Checking your personal e-mail account during County work time is not an acceptable use. You may however, check your personal e-mail account during your breaks as long as your replies are also done during your breaks, and you are not interfering with other County business or use of the computer you are using. Downloading attachments should also be avoided. Such use must be de minimis and shall not affect you work product.

- ***Can I play music or radio from the Internet or watch a news program or other streaming video on my county computer?***

No. This type use is personal and section 4.2 applies. This type use is not "occasional and brief in duration". In addition, it interferes with other County business. Use of streaming

audio or video takes a large amount of the County's bandwidth for Internet use. One or two people using Internet streaming can significantly slow others business use. Internet streaming is restricted to business use only and should be as brief as possible.

- ***Can I surf the Internet while I am on break or lunch?***

With the exception of personal use relating a County benefit such as retirement, deferred compensation (457 plans) or 401a, Internet surfing should be avoided. Any use must be de minimis. You should consider the rules similar to use of County phones. You may not use your County Internet address as the return or notification address for personal business. This causes you to receive personal e-mails during County time, which may interfere with your duties. In addition, you are not allowed to use streaming video or audio.

- ***I don't take breaks so can I respond to my personal e-mail and surf the Internet at my convenience during the day?***

Normally, employee breaks are allocated in solid blocks of time. If you take your breaks in short periods throughout the day you should have made those arrangements previously with your supervisor or County Official. You cannot simply use County resources described in this policy for the personal uses allowed at any time during the day, then claim you are taking your breaks during that time when questioned about it later. Be aware that use logs are kept by the servers that house both our Internet and e-mail applications. Those logs are public records. The bottom line is the personal uses allowed should be done on break. Previous arrangements with your supervisor should be made if you take breaks for short periods throughout the day for such use. Such use must also comply with this policy, including specific prohibitions.

- ***What should I do when I get a message that I need a plug-in or to update my browser or other Internet application?***

In general terms, when you receive an Internet notification that an upgrade to a particular application is available you should answer "No" (you do not want to install or download the upgrade). If a plug-in or upgrade is required to perform official business you should contact the Information Technology Department prior to installing or downloading. Some upgrades or plug-ins will affect other applications that may be installed on your computer.

- ***Can I use my County e-mail or phones to communicate with my friends or relatives during my breaks and lunch?***

As a general rule, use of your County e-mail account for "personal business" should be avoided. Answering an occasional e-mail sent to you about personal business is not a violation as long as the use complies with section 4.2 and use is de minimis. Using your County e-mail account to conduct regular personal business is not an acceptable use. Even for the occasional reply or informational message you are allowed, you should avoid use of County time if possible.

The same rules apply to the use of phones. Use of County phones for personal communication with others during breaks is not a violation as long as such use does not

interfere with County business. However, you should avoid use that will cause you to receive or make personal calls during County working hours. That use must be "occasional and brief" and not interfere with your duties or County business.

- ***If someone phones or e-mails me about a non-business issue can I answer?***
Yes. As long as this occurs only "occasionally and is brief in duration" and does not interfere with other County business. However, if this type use becomes more than occasional, interferes with your duties, or affects County business, as determined by your supervisor, the use becomes unacceptable.
- ***I am on someone's e-mail list. They regularly send me non-business-related e-mails (i.e. jokes). Can I look at them? What should I do?***
If the use fits the exceptions in section 4.2, (is occasional, brief, and does not interfere with county business) no violation has occurred. However, if you are receiving personal communications on a more than occasional basis, you should contact the sender and advise them that the address they are using is for official County business. You can ask them to remove your name or to change your address to your personal e-mail account.
- ***What do I do if I access the wrong Internet site?***
Don't panic! The best thing to do is to back out of the site, remember what it was that got you there, and don't go back. Everyone makes this kind of mistake. It is also advisable to contact your supervisor to notify them of your mistake.
- ***An employee from another agency is trying to send me an attachment that won't come through? Why? What should I do?***
You should contact the sender and ask what type of information is being sent and the complete file name. You should then contact the Help Desk in Information Technology and wait for instructions.
- ***Can I have a personal cell phone that I pay for on the County's account?***
No. No new personal cell phone accounts are allowed on the County's account. All existing accounts are being cancelled as service providers renew their contracts with the State of Washington.
- ***I have a cellular phone I am assigned for County business. Can I just take it home and use it during evening and off-hours then pay the County for the calls?***
No. Unless your position is listed in section 8.8, County cellular phones are to be used during work time only. Examples of positions required to be always available for contact include the Sheriff, County Administrator, Emergency Services Coordinator, and Public Works Director.
- ***Why am I required to pay for personal calls even though they are part of the "free" calling time on the County phone I am assigned?***
The minutes you use for personal business that are termed "free" by the service provider

are not actually free. They are a part of the base monthly rate. Monthly plans with no "free" minutes are substantially cheaper than plans with "free" minutes. The Auditor has determined that all use of cellular phones incur a cost. In addition, personal use can cause other business use to be pushed into the per minute fees charged for use over the "free" monthly minutes. The County occasionally monitors cellular accounts to ensure that departments do not purchase plans with more minutes than are needed for business use. More minutes means more cost.

- ***Can I use the SCAN system to make personal long distance calls during my breaks and lunch?***

No. The SCAN system is for business use and offers a rate not available to the general public. The County Official in your department can authorize personal use in an emergency situation. In such a case, you will be required to reimburse the County for the personal use. If you make long-distance phone calls from County facilities, you should purchase a pre-paid phone card; they are inexpensive and work from County phones.

- ***Can I use the County's Seattle trunk line (6-9) to make personal calls?***

No. The County's trunk line to Seattle is for business use only, even during evening and weekend hours. In addition, use of the Seattle trunk line is a benefit not available to the general public and personal use would be considered "personal gain" which is prohibited.

- ***Can I send and/or receive personal faxes on County Equipment?***

Occasional and minor use with prior permission of the County Official is allowed. You must pay for use according the County's Consolidated Fee Schedule. Outgoing faxes must be local, not incur long distance charges, and be done on break, lunch, or after hours. An example of an acceptable use might be receiving or sending a fax of a legal document on a family issue. An example of an unacceptable use might be subscribing to a weekly faxed newsletter from your investment company.

- ***Can I make personal copies on my department's copy machine?***

Occasional and minor use with prior permission of the County Official is allowed. You must pay for use according the County's Consolidated Fee Schedule. Copying must be done on break, lunch, or after work hours. An example of an acceptable use might be copying a newspaper article you received from a friend. An example of an unacceptable use might be using the copy machine to make 20 weekly copies of your club's newsletter.