

# P O L I C Y



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<b>Policy Title</b> Internet and E-Mail Use		

<b>Council Resolution No.</b> C/27/07	<b>Date</b> January 11, 2007	<b>Cross Reference</b> New Policy	<b>Effective</b> January 11, 2007
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## **Policy Scope:**

This "Internet and E-Mail Use" policy applies to all Lacombe County (hereinafter referred to as the "County") officials, employees, guests and third-parties (hereinafter referred to as the "Users") whose access to or use of Internet and e-mail resources is provided by the County or available through equipment owned or leased by the County whether or not that access is during normal working hours and whether such access is from the County's premises or elsewhere.

## **Policy Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines governing the acceptable use of the County's internet and e-mail resources.

By the County establishing and maintaining compliance with this policy, the benefits of these communication tools can be realized while the risks and costs are mitigated. The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- use of the County's internet and e-mail resources is for the benefit of the County;
- users understand that e-mail messages and documents may be subject to the same laws, regulations, policies and other requirements as information communicated in other written forms and formats;
- disruptions to the County's activities from inappropriate use of the County's e-mail and Internet services are avoided; and
- users are provided guidelines describing their personal responsibilities regarding confidentiality, privacy and acceptable use of the County's internet and e-mail as defined by this policy.

## **Principles of Acceptable Use:**

As with any resource provided by the County, internet and e-mail resources should be dedicated to legitimate County business activities and governed by rules of conduct similar to those applicable to the use of other information technology resources. The use of internet and

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e-mail resources imposes certain responsibilities and obligations on all Users and is subject to the County's policies and procedures and all provincial and federal laws.

Acceptable use must be legal and ethical. Acceptable use demonstrates respect for intellectual property, ownership of information, network system security mechanisms, and individuals' rights to privacy and freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance.

Furthermore, the nature of e-mail raises expectations for a timely response - Users are urged to read and respond to all e-mail in a prompt and courteous manner.

All internet and e-mail use shall:

- respect and uphold the law, including provincial and federal laws and regulations and the laws of other jurisdictions;
- comply with the County's stated policies, procedures and standards;
- be courteous and follow accepted standards of etiquette;
- protect others' privacy and confidentiality;
- reflect responsible use of internet and e-mail resources;
- use information technology resources efficiently and productively; and
- contain a clause that claims the User's confidentiality over the contents of any communication.

**Acceptable and Unacceptable Activities:**

Acceptable internet and e-mail activities are those that conform to the purpose, vision, mission and key principles of the County and to each User's job duties and/or responsibilities. The following list, although not exhaustive, provides examples of *unacceptable* uses:

- engaging in any illegal activity or using the County's resources for any illegal purpose;
- knowingly disseminating harassing, abusive, malicious, sexually explicit, threatening or illegal information, including jokes or cartoons;
- using the County's resources for purposes unrelated to the County's business activities, such as personal commercial use, advertisements, solicitations or promotions;
- using the County's resources to send messages expressing controversial, potentially offensive and/or defamatory comments of individuals, bodies corporate or groups including, but not limited to, religion, politics and social policies;
- downloading or using the material, software or other intellectual property of others in violation of software licenses, copyright and trademark laws;
- disclosing any passwords or security means and methods adopted by the County;

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- downloading or using any software not approved for use by the County;

Users may use the County's internet and e-mail resources for incidental and occasional personal use, provided that such use is reasonable in duration, does not take place during normal work hours (excluding coffee and lunch breaks), does not result in increased costs to the County and complies with this policy.

Furthermore, Users must recognize that electronic correspondence is not inherently private, that messages could be misdirected and that the County takes no responsibility resulting from the disclosure of private communications occurring over the County's resources. Furthermore, the County retains the right to monitor any and all electronic communications and use of the internet to ensure the integrity of the system and compliance with this policy. Users are reminded that ALL documents, including electronic copies, may be subject to a court order and, as such, disclosure may apply to a User's personal documents as well as any work-related documents.

Users are urged to keep in mind that, if they do not wish their mother to read about it in the media (e.g., *Edmonton Journal*, *Red Deer Advocate*), they should not put it into an e-mail message.

Users are advised to remove themselves from internet and e-mail lists not dealing with work-related topics.

### **Privacy Considerations:**

Files in Users' accounts and data on the network are regarded as personal: that is, the County does not routinely monitor this information. However, the County reserves the right to view or scan any file, e-mail or software stored on the County's systems or transmitted over the County's networks and may do so periodically to verify that software and hardware are working correctly, to look for particular kinds of data or software (such as computer viruses or unauthorized software), or to audit the use of the County's resources. Potential violations of this policy that come to the County's attention during these and other activities may be acted upon.

Users must not send e-mail messages containing unusually sensitive information over the Internet without using an encryption method approved by the County. Furthermore, the County must be provided with a copy of all passwords and/or private keys needed to decrypt the communications.

### **Sanctions:**

Potential violations of this policy may result in suspension of the User's access to the County's internet and e-mail resources, followed by a review of any costs and/or charges incurred by the County.

Violations of this policy may subject Users to the loss of internet and e-mail privileges and may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Illegal acts involving the County's internet and e-mail resources may also subject violators to prosecution by local, provincial, and/or federal authorities. Suspected law violations may be

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referred to police agencies. The County may seek legal action against any violators, including damages, indemnification and costs.

**User's Acknowledgement:**

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to comply with this Internet and E-Mail Use policy as set forth above. I understand that failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination, as well as legal action against me to seek damages, indemnification and costs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date