

## 1C-5 COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE – REVISED APRIL 12, 2022

The use of Trinity County information systems, including computers, fax machines, smart phones, tablet computers and all forms of Internet/Intranet access, is for Trinity County business and for authorized purposes only. Brief and occasional personal use of the electronic mail system or the Internet is acceptable as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in any expense to the County.

Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the ability to perform daily job activities. Electronic communication should not be used to solicit or sell products or services that are unrelated to the County's business; distract, intimidate, or harass coworkers or third parties; or disrupt the workplace.

Use of Trinity County computers, networks, and Internet access is a privilege granted by department heads and may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct carried out on such systems. Improper use may result in discipline up to and including termination.

**Reasonable efforts must be made by all users to preserve the overall security of all computers, e-mail, and internet systems used by Trinity County. The information in all computer systems must be protected against unintentional damage due to human and technical errors. Doing regular backups for each system can offer some insurance for this. Information Technology Support (IT Support) will be responsible for protecting the primary or central systems.**

**All County computers must use antivirus software installed and configured by IT Support. Users are prohibited from disabling or tampering with the installed antivirus software unless authorized by IT Support.**

**Other protective efforts include maintaining an updated, proper, and secure password. Passwords should be changed often and never shared. A forgotten password or unauthorized use of a password should be reported to IT Support at once.**

**Attempts to access unauthorized information, files, or a system are violations of this policy and result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Employees that find they accidentally have access to something they should not, should report the gap in security to IT Support at once. Employees should refrain from investigating any area that they do not have express authority to review.**

**E-mail is public record and subject to public record regulations with respect to inspection, disclosure, scheduled retention, and disposition. Trinity County owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system**

used in the County. Trinity County also reserves the right to monitor electronic mail messages (including personal/private/instant messaging systems, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and their content, as well as any and all use of the Internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and Internet content. Employees must be aware that the electronic mail messages sent and received using County equipment are not private and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving by County officials at all times. Trinity County has the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of the network or on individual computers or storage media to assure compliance with policy and state and federal laws. No employee may access another employee's computer, computer files, or electronic mail messages without prior authorization from either the employee or an appropriate County official. No employee shall break any copyright laws or download any illegal or unauthorized downloads. Trinity County monitors its entire informational systems and employees may be subject to discipline up to and including termination for any misuse of County informational systems.

**Elected officials and employees should not connect personal computers or equipment to Trinity County electronic systems, unless expressly permitted to do so by the County Judge, supervisor and or IT Support. Violation of this policy, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.**

**Every elected official and employee have a responsibility to maintain and enhance Trinity County's public image and to use the county e-mail and access to the Internet in a productive manner. Messages or information sent by elected officials or employees are a reflection on Trinity County. Each elected official or employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images that they place or send over the county's e-mail and Internet system. Employees are expected to communicate in a professional manner that will reflect positively on them and Trinity County. While some users might include personal "disclaimers" in electronic messages, there is still a connection to the county, and the messages might be tied to the county. Users are encouraged to use some constraint in reacting to messages. Do not send emotional responses.**

**The following guidelines have been established for using e-mail and the Internet:**

- Software should not be downloaded or installed from the Internet without prior approval from **information Technology Support**, County Judge or Auditor, as the download or installation could introduce a computer virus or malware onto the County's network.
- **Contact IT Support immediately if you suspect an e-mail account has been compromised or think a harmful link has been downloaded to computer system. When a computer system is determined to be infected with a virus or other malicious software the system may be blocked and removed from the County network until an IT Technician has verified that the system is virus-free.**

- **All e-mail inbound to the County is scanned for viruses, malware, and spam. E-mail that poses a risk to the County is blocked. No security software is 100% effective, however, so users must exercise appropriate caution when opening emails or attachments.**
- **External Web sites that are known sources of computer viruses and malware are blocked. No security software is 100% effective, however, so users should exercise appropriate caution when accessing external Web sites.**
- **Despite the best measures, however, systems can still be at risk due to the rapid proliferation of malicious code via e-mail, shared files, and other methods. Therefore, in addition to maintaining up to date antivirus software.**
  - **Never open any files or macros attached to an e-mail from an unknown, suspicious, or untrustworthy source or if you receive an attachment from someone you know unexpectedly. Delete these attachments immediately.**
  - **Delete Spam, chain, and other junk e-mail without forwarding it.**
  - **Never download files from unknown or suspicious sources.**
- **The County e-mail and Internet access may not be used for transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications or materials that are obscene, sexually explicit, or X-rated. Trinity County has a zero-tolerance policy in such cases. Such improper use of county equipment will result in immediate termination.**
- **The County e-mail and Internet access may not be used for transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications of a discriminatory, or harassing nature. No e-mail messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual preference will be transmitted.**
- **No abusive, profane, or offensive language is to be transmitted through the county's e-mail system or accessed on the Internet.**
- **The County e-mail and Internet access may not be used for transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications that are intended to threaten or instill fear in the recipient.**
- **Electronic media may not be used for any purpose that is illegal, against county policy, or contrary to the County's best interest.**

- **Solicitation of non-county business or any use of the county e-mail system or Internet access for personal gain is strictly prohibited.**
- **No e-mail or other electronic communications may be sent which hides the identity of the sender, represents the sender as someone else, or represents the sender as someone from another company or county. All messages communicated on the county e-mail or Internet system should contain the elected office or employee's name.**
- **The County Network may not be used to express any views or ideas that are contrary to official policy. All communications must comply with county policy.**
- **Communications cannot disclose any confidential or proprietary County Information.**

Approved by Commissioners' Court April 12, 2022