



Communications Policy

E-Mail and Internet Use

Introduction

The use of email and the internet are efficient and cost-effective ways of communicating and obtaining information. If properly used, such means of communication are an invaluable business tool. However, improper or inappropriate use of email and the internet can have an adverse effect on the Company's business. Such use can also have serious legal consequences. This Email and Internet Policy sets out the Company's guidelines on the use of email and the internet and the consequences of failure to comply with the Policy.

The Policy applies to all the Company employees, contractors, consultants, agents and any other persons who at any time use or have access to email or the internet during the course of their employment or business dealings with the Company, whether such use takes place on the Company's premises or elsewhere ("Users").

In respect of the Company's employees, the Policy forms part of each employee's contract of employment. In respect of other Users, the Policy forms part of the contractual relationship between the Company and the User.

Viruses

Viruses can be introduced into the Company's network or transmitted to a third party's system by sending and receiving email and by using the internet. The deliberate introduction of a virus is a criminal offence. Accidental introduction of viruses may, in certain circumstances, give rise to a claim against the Company. All Users must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no viruses are transmitted and must follow the Company anti-virus procedures.

Authorised Use

Users are entitled to make reasonable personal use of e-mail and internet facilities outwith normal working hours e.g. lunchtimes. Such use must be consistent with this policy. The company reserves the right to discontinue this entitlement for all or some employees if it views the use of e-mail and internet facilities as excessive or inappropriate.]

Unauthorised Use

Email and the internet must not be used for the creation, transmission, downloading, browsing, viewing, reproduction or accessing of any image, material or other data of any kind which:

- is illegal, obscene, pornographic, indecent, vulgar or threatening;

- contains unacceptable content, including but not limited to, sexually explicit messages, images, cartoons, or jokes, unwelcome propositions or any other content which is designed to cause or likely to cause harassment or provocation of any other person or organisation based on sex, sexual orientation, age, race, national origin, disability, religious or political belief.
- is defamatory, slanderous or libelous;
- deliberately introduces viruses into the email or internet systems of the Company or any other party or is designed to deliberately corrupt or destroy the data of other users;
- conflicts with the Company's commercial interests.
- infringes or may infringe the intellectual property or other rights of another;
- is part of a chain letter, "junk mail" or contains unsolicited commercial or advertising material;
- violates the privacy of other users;
- disrupts the work of other users.
- Users must not use the internet to access any social networking sites for personal use including Bebo, My Space, Twitter or Facebook.
- Downloading of music from sites [e.g. limewire] is also prohibited

Users must not send emails which make representations, contractual commitments, or any other form of statement concerning the Company unless they have specific authority from the Company to do so.

Privacy and Monitoring

The Company may (i) monitor and record any e-mails which are transmitted over its computer system or (ii) monitor or record the use of the internet by employees, and the nature of material downloaded from the internet, for the following reasons:-

- To ascertain whether the Company's practices, policies and procedures (including this Internet and E-mail Policy) have been complied with;
- To investigate or detect the unauthorised use by any employees of the Company's computer system;
- To secure the effective operation of the Company's computer system;
- To determine whether any communication has been made which relates to the business of the Company; or
- For the purpose of preventing or detecting crime.

Any e-mails sent by employees may therefore be intercepted and monitored by the Company for any of the above reasons. Accordingly, any messages which are sent are not private. If you wish a message to be confidential, or if you wish any internet access to be confidential, you should not use the Company's system.

Failure to comply with the Policy

Any failure on the part of an employee of the Company to comply with the Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Company. Depending upon the severity of the offence a breach of the Policy may be considered gross misconduct.

Any failure to comply with the Policy on the part of a User who is not an employee may result in the immediate termination of the contractual or other relationship between that person or organisation and the Company.

Any unauthorised use of email or the internet by a User which the Company, at its sole discretion, considers may amount to a criminal offence shall, without notice to the User concerned, be reported to the police or other relevant authority.

Telephone Use

Employees of the Company should not make or receive personal calls during working hours. The only exception to this is that in an emergency such calls may be made or taken but should be kept to a minimum to delay in dealing with Company business. Employees are allowed to make occasional calls using the company telephone during their lunch break, but this must not be excessive. Any such personal calls must not disrupt the work of other users and must not involve language which is likely to be offensive, or unacceptable to others. Inappropriate or excessive personal use of the telephone may lead to disciplinary action.

Itemised bills will be periodically screened to monitor telephone use, excessive use for personal calls may result in disciplinary action being taken