

## **SECTION 5.11**

### **COMPUTER, ELECTRONIC MAIL, AND INTERNET USE**

It is the policy of Jefferson County to ensure that the use of computers and electronic communications equipment is consistent with the County's legitimate business interests. Therefore, Jefferson County Management Information Systems Department (MIS), as an authorized representative of Jefferson County, reserves and intends to exercise the right to access and monitor the use of such equipment as deemed necessary. Employees shall adhere to the following guidelines when using computer and/or electronic communications equipment:

1. Computers, computer files, software, the E-Mail\* system and the Internet furnished to employees are County property intended primarily for business use only. Limited personal use of the Internet is allowed. However, employees are reminded that use of any and all Jefferson County property is primarily for the use and purpose of County-related business. Any personal use of the Internet is expected to be on the user's own time and is not to interfere with the person's job responsibilities. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. County employees are prohibited from installing any software on County computers without the approval of the MIS Department. This includes software and software upgrades available on the Internet. Of specific note are those software products such as Kazaa, BearShare, Gnutella, Limewire, Wrapster, etc. that afford peer to peer connectivity and open up portals which pose a significant security risk to the County's Network.

The use of radio station software programs, all of which utilize large amounts of bandwidth, are also prohibited on county machines, unless otherwise authorized, as the use of these programs interferes with the operation of the County's network. Such software (peer to peer and radio stations software) should never be installed on County owned computers or any computer attached to the County's network. Existing installations of such software should be reported to the MIS Department so that it may be removed immediately.

County employees are prohibited from installing County software on their (non-county) personal computer, unless otherwise authorized. In addition, employees are prohibited from altering the existing hardware or making additions to hardware on County computers.

\* County E-Mail is provided for County Employees at the written request of their immediate supervisor. E-Mail is also provided for all Department Heads and Elected Officials. When a County Employee, Department Head or Elected Official leaves their position with the County their e-mail account will be removed their last day of employment.

2. The County prohibits the use of computers, the E-mail system or the Internet in ways that are disruptive to others. Foul, inappropriate, or offensive messages or documents containing racial or religious slurs or sexually explicit language/photographs are prohibited. Employees should also note that E-mail messages and other contents of a computer hard drive are public record and are open to public inspection in accordance with the Open Records Act of the State of Texas.

3. The County purchases and licenses the use of various types computer software for business purposes. The County does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation and unless authorized by the software developer, does not have the right to reproduce it. Employees shall use the software only in accordance with the license agreement. According to the U.S. Copyright Law, illegal reproduction of software can be subject to civil damages and criminal penalties including fines and imprisonment.
4. The Internet is to be used primarily for County business only and is not to be used for personal gain. Employees should adhere to the highest professional/ethical standards when using the Internet as they are representatives of the County. Employees should not access the Internet without County-authorized virus detection software enabled.
5. Employees having knowledge of the misuse of any computer equipment, electronic communications equipment or software shall notify their respective Department Head or Elected Official. If deemed appropriate, the Department Head or Elected Official should notify the Human Resources Department and/or the Management Information Systems Department.
6. Employees logging on to a County Domain are required to save (backup) all County related documents and computer files, in general, to the County server. Doing so allows for nightly backup and guarantees the preservation of all such County documents and/or files. Employees who use computers on the county network are responsible for determining that they have the proper knowledge and understanding required to access and save County records to the County server. Employees who believe they do not possess these skills should contact (or have their immediate supervisor contact) the county MIS Department.
7. Employees in violation of any portion of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.