

INTERNET AND E-MAIL USE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Tayside Contracts aims to help employees make the best use of the Internet and Email systems and facilities. The use of Internet and email can bring significant benefits to Tayside Contracts and plays an essential role in the activities and delivery of services. However, it can also introduce significant types of risk to our operations.

The aim of this policy is to provide a safe framework for using the Internet and email, without exposing Tayside Contracts or our employees to the risks which can come with its use.

This policy has been developed to:

- Ensure acceptable use of Internet and email by all users.
- Establish the parameters of appropriate use and best practice.
- Protect Tayside Contracts and users from potential legal liabilities.
- Explain the consequences of breaching acceptable use.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels and grades within Tayside Contracts, including employees, consultants, agency staff and volunteers.

The policy applies to all electronic media and services that are:

- Accessed on or from any Tayside Contracts' premises;
- Accessed using Tayside Contracts' computer equipment;
- Accessed from an individual's own devices, remotely or by wireless within the premises, and/or used in a manner that identifies the individual with Tayside Contracts.

REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Tayside Contracts will conform to the current and relevant legislation governing the use and monitoring of Internet access and email, including:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act (2000)
- Lawful Business Practice Regulations (2000)

At all times users should act in such a manner as to protect the confidentiality of the information being processed in accordance with the GDPR.

LEGAL LIABILITY

Employees should be aware that legal responsibility for employee emails and for internet misuse by an employee rests both with the organisation and with the individual. Under the law of defamation Tayside Contracts is liable as publisher of material, which is distributed by any employee for whom

the organisation is legally responsible. Employees should be aware at all times that responsibility for email and internet misuse applies more widely than to the individual who misuses it.

PERSONAL USE OF INTERNET AND EMAIL IN THE WORKPLACE

Tayside Contracts provide access to the internet and email through computers and other devices. Internet access and email communication is primarily for business use. However, we recognise that from time to time employees may need to deal with private business or personal matters during the course of their working day. In the interests of good employer/employee relationships, limited personal use of the internet and email is therefore permitted, in employees own time subject to the following rules:

- The internet may be accessed for personal use during employees' own time only e.g. lunch times, break times or outwith working hours.
- Personal email messages should only be composed or read during employees' own time.

MISUSE OF INTERNET AND EMAIL IN THE WORKPLACE

The guidelines set out in this policy are designed to reduce the risk of both employees and Tayside Contracts incurring liability in relation to Internet and email usage.

The following list provides some examples of the types of activity which would be considered to be misuse:

- Using the internet or email for any purpose which would reflect negatively on Tayside Contracts or its employees.
- Carrying out any activity which would cause damage or disruption to Tayside Contracts operations, or which would constitute a criminal offence.
- Creating, transmitting or disseminating material that may bring Tayside Contracts' name or the name of any of its employees into disrepute, whether on Tayside Contracts' website or externally.
- Intentionally accessing, viewing or downloading pornography, or any type of illegal material or material which contravenes Tayside Contracts' values, which are incorporated in our Employee Charter and our employment policies and procedures.
- Accessing, retrieving or printing text and graphical information which exceeds the bounds of generally accepted standards of good taste and ethics or which contradicts Tayside Contracts organisational values and/or employment policies.
- Carrying out any freelance work unrelated to the Tayside Contracts business, gambling, contributing to internet newsgroups, playing games or conducting in political activities.
- Carrying out any activities which would incur unauthorised costs.
- Intentionally accessing, executing or transmitting malicious software.
- Participating in peer-to-peer file sharing which is the process of downloading files via file-sharing software from the hard drives of other users. Or additionally others who use file-sharing software obtaining files they want from your computer's hard drive.

This list is not exhaustive, and Tayside Contracts reserves the right to take action against an employee who, in the reasonable opinion of Tayside Contracts, has misused/abused the system.

You should be aware that all Internet site visits are traceable and, therefore, inappropriate sites should not be visited. If you connect accidentally to websites that contain illegal or offensive material, you should disconnect from the site immediately. Should you have any concerns regarding a site which you have inadvertently accessed you should inform your line manager or the IT Manager.

Whilst every effort is made to restrict access to Internet sites containing inappropriate material, this cannot be guaranteed due to the constantly changing nature of the Internet.

MONITORING INTERNET & E-MAIL USE

Tayside Contracts respects your right to privacy and recognises that all employees' private lives can extend to the workplace. In exercising its right to monitor email messages and internet access, Tayside Contracts is conscious of its obligations under the GDPR. Any information gained will only be used for the stated purpose of monitoring.

Whilst the volume of e-mails sent and received and Internet usage will be routinely monitored by the IT Manager to ensure the optimum use of e-mail and Internet as business tools, the contents of e-mail messages or details of websites visited will not be routinely monitored. However, you should be aware that this may be authorised by the relevant CMT member, following consultation with the HR Manager, where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a serious breach of this policy. Reasonable grounds may include the need to protect system security, fulfil legal or other regulatory obligations, substantiate or refute evidence as part of a disciplinary investigation, and comply with legal proceedings or to protect the rights or property of Tayside Contracts.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR EMAIL USERS

Email provides employees and Tayside Contracts with a speedy, convenient and efficient means to communicate information. Some Tayside Contracts' email accounts can be accessed from home or other remote locations. Tayside Contracts' policies apply regardless of where accounts are accessed.

Always keep the following points in mind:

- Take care to ensure the email address is correct to avoid breaches of confidentiality.
- Initiate the Out of Office assistant on Outlook giving details of alternative contacts or arrangements for planned periods of absence.
- Try to avoid misunderstanding when using email communication. For example, the use of a formal email style with a salutation and a formal signing off can eliminate misunderstanding of tone. Avoid using upper case as it is generally interpreted as shouting. Curt or abusive emails should also be avoided.
- Be aware that all email correspondence is logged and stored and will be made available for investigation of inappropriate use or content which may result in disciplinary action.
- Report any inappropriate use or content to your line manager.
- Always think carefully before personal or sensitive information is sent by email including customer, client, and staff information and anything that is considered commercially confidential.
- Suspicious emails should not be opened. Take particular care with email attachments from unsolicited or unknown senders. Such emails should be reported immediately to the IT department who will advise appropriate action.

- Do not use language which might cause offence or be seen as abusive, discriminatory, bullying in nature or harassment.
- Do not send or forward jokes, chain letters or other offensive or inappropriate content.
- Never distribute documents, pictures, music or the works of others without the copyright owner's permission. Copying any materials which are protected by copyright, without the permission of the copyright owner, is an offence which can give rise to both personal liability and liability on the part of Tayside Contracts.

This list is not exhaustive, and Tayside Contracts reserves the right to take action against an employee who, in the reasonable opinion of Tayside Contracts, has abused the system.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNET USERS

Tayside Contracts recognises that the internet is a valuable resource and provides an excellent source of information as well as an excellent means to communicate quickly and effectively to a wide audience.

While Tayside Contracts recognises the value of the internet, they also recognise that it must be used with caution as well as used in a manner that is consistent with Tayside Contracts' values and standards of conduct.

Always keep the following points in mind:

- Exercise caution when browsing unfamiliar or untrustworthy websites.
- Do not express opinions over the internet that claim to represent the views of Tayside Contracts.
- Be specific in your use of words when using search engines.
- Manage your time spent browsing.
- Employees must take particular care to understand the copyright, trademark; libel; slander and public speech control laws, so that our use of the internet does not inadvertently violate any laws which might be enforceable against us.
- Employees must not access the internet using Tayside Contracts' equipment by routes other than those approved by IT unit.
- Any employee who attempts to disable, defeat or circumvent any of Tayside Contracts' security facilities will be subject to disciplinary action.
- All information on the internet should be considered suspect and valued accordingly when used in Tayside Contracts' processes. Only use information provided by sites which you trust.

Employees using internet facilities for non-business purposes in personal time must still adhere to these usage instructions.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

Any breach of this policy which occurs during an employee's working or personal time, i.e. lunch break, will be regarded as misconduct and will be addressed in accordance with Tayside Contracts' Disciplinary Policy. Serious breaches of the policy such as accessing, downloading or circulating pornographic or any other material of a discriminatory nature may constitute gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal.

The examples of misuse outlined throughout this policy are merely indicative and not exhaustive.

RELATED POLICIES

The Internet and Email Use Policy links to the following policies which can be accessed on the Intranet, or requested from your line manager or from the HR Admin Team:

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Social Media and Mobile Devices Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Security Policy

The above list is not exhaustive.

POLICY REVIEW

The Internet and E-Mail Use Policy will be reviewed at three yearly intervals, or as required by legislative changes.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Tayside Contracts respects the privacy of our employees, any personal data processed during the application of this policy will be in line with Data Protection Legislation. Further information on how we may process personal data for the purpose of applying this policy can be found in our Privacy Notice.

Should you have any queries or require further clarification regarding any aspects of this policy or related policies please contact, HR Services on 01382 812721 or employment.policies@tayside-contracts.co.uk

If you would like this document translated into another language or in another format such as audio or large print then please contact Angie Thompson, Equalities and Communications Manager on 01382 834165 or angie.thompson@tayside-contracts.co.uk