

Sample Internet, Computer and Internet Usage Policy

Internet, Computer and Internet Usage Policy	Policy # 1.0
Created – [Date]	Revised – [Date]

1.0 Introduction

[Practice Name] recognizes that use of the Internet has many benefits for our practice and its staff. The Internet and e-mail make communication more efficient and effective.

Therefore, staff is encouraged to use the Internet appropriately. Unacceptable usage of the Internet can place [Practice Name] and others at risk. This policy discusses acceptable usage of the Internet.

1.1 Guidelines

The following guidelines have been established for using the Internet and e-mail in an appropriate, ethical and professional manner.

1. [PRACTICE NAME] Internet and e-mail access may not be used for transmitting, retrieving or storing of any communications of a defamatory, discriminatory or harassing nature or materials that are obscene or X-rated. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual preference shall be transmitted. Harassment of any kind is prohibited.
2. Disparaging, abusive, profane, or offensive language; materials that would adversely or negatively reflect upon [PRACTICE NAME] or be contrary to our best interests; and any illegal activities -- including piracy, cracking, extortion, blackmail, copyright infringement, and unauthorized access to any computers on the Internet or e-mail -- are forbidden.
3. Copyrighted materials belonging to entities other than [PRACTICE NAME] may not be transmitted by employees on the company's system. All employees obtaining access to other companies' or individual's materials must respect all copyrights and may not copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyrighted materials, except with permission or as a single copy to reference only. If you find something on the Internet that may be interesting to others, do not copy it to a network drive. Instead, give the URL (uniform resource locator or "address") to the person who may be interested in the information and have that person look at it on his/her own.
4. Do not use the system in a way that disrupts its use by others. This includes excessive dial-in usage, sending or receiving many large files and "spamming" (sending e-mail messages to a large number of users.)
5. The Internet is full of useful programs that can be downloaded, but some of them may contain computer viruses that can extensively damage our computers. Be sure to virus-

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check downloaded files immediately. Also, many browser add-on packages (called "plug-ins") are available to download. There is no guarantee that such will be compatible with other programs on the network and such may cause problems; therefore, please refrain from downloading such plug-ins.

6. Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio or images that he/she places or sends over the company's Internet and e-mail system. No e-mail or other electronic communications may be sent which hides the identity of the sender or represents the sender as someone else. Also, be aware that [PRACTICE NAME]'s name is attached to all messages so use discretion in formulating messages.

7. E-mail is not guaranteed to be private or confidential. All electronic communications are [PRACTICE NAME] property. Therefore, [PRACTICE NAME] reserves the right to examine, monitor and regulate e-mail messages, directories and files, as well as Internet usage. Also, the Internet is not secure so don't assume that others cannot read -- or possibly alter -- your messages. Keep in mind HIPAA guidelines when issuing any electronic communications.

8. Internal and external e-mail messages are considered business records and may be subject to discovery in the event of litigation. Be aware of this possibility when sending e-mail within and outside the Company.

1.3 [PRACTICE NAME] 's Right to Monitor and Consequences

All company-supplied technology, including computer systems and company-related work records, belong to [PRACTICE NAME] and not staff. [PRACTICE NAME] may routinely monitor usage patterns for its e-mail and Internet communications. Although encouraged to explore the vast resources available on the Internet, staff should use discretion in the sites that are accessed.

Since all the computer systems and software, as well as the e-mail and Internet connection, are [PRACTICE NAME] owned, all company policies are in effect at all times. Any staff member who abuses the privilege of [PRACTICE NAME] facilitated access to e-mail or the Internet, may be denied access to the Internet and, if appropriate, be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1.4 Questions Regarding the Use of the Internet or E-mail

If you have questions regarding the appropriate use of the Internet or E-mail, contact the office manager.