

**C. Use of the Internet**

Internet access on County owned or leased devices is to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of Hillsborough County. (See Hillsborough County Statement of Ethics). Accessing, sending, storing, displaying, downloading, uploading, blogging, instant messaging, or printing sensitive materials including, but not limited to, illegal activities, gambling, sexually explicit materials, weapons, drugs, violence or materials that include inappropriate language, profanity, obscenity, racial, ethnic or discriminatory comments, defamatory statements, or otherwise inappropriate content (to include statements such as partisan political positions, religious positions, and other statements that may subject the County, its mission, or its employees to be viewed in a light that is not in the best interest of the Hillsborough County) is strictly prohibited. Supervisors and managers may further limit access to and the use of the Internet at their discretion. Where personal Internet usage is permitted, such use should be brief, infrequent, and in accordance with the guidelines of this policy and any internal department policies, procedures or practices regarding Internet usage. Employees who access or use the Internet in violation of this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Moreover, excessive Internet usage, Internet usage that interferes with the employee's performance or productivity, and/or Internet usage which conflicts with the best interest of the County may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

**D. Use of E-mail**

E-mail is to be used for official County business, which includes communications with other County departments, governmental entities, and private sector entities. Similarly to Internet use, e-mail is to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of Hillsborough County. While personal e-mail is permitted, such use should be brief, infrequent, and in accordance with the guidelines of this policy and any internal department policies, procedures or practices regarding e-mail usage. Employees who send or receive E-mails in violation of this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Excessive personal e-mail usage, personal e-mail usage that interferes with the employee's performance or productivity, and/or personal e-mail usage which conflicts with the best interests of the County may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Questions concerning the acceptable use of County E-mail should be addressed to the Organization Support Division of the Human Resources Department.

County E-mail shall not be used to send or receive the following classifications of information except when required as part of the official duties of the employee's position. The following examples are representative, but not all inclusive:

- Messages which may reflect unfavorably on the County, or which may be perceived as representing the County's official position on any matter, when authority to disseminate such information has not been expressly granted.
- Confidential/proprietary information or data to persons within or outside of the County.
- Sensitive information including protected health information (PHI) and Social Security Numbers (SSN).
- Content that may constitute harassment or be considered discriminatory, obscene, derogatory, defamatory, threatening in violation of the County's workplace violence policy, or excessively personal, regardless of the intent of the sender.
- Any offensive or disruptive messages including illegal activity, gambling, sexual implications, pornography, materials that include profane, obscene, or inappropriate language, and/or racial, ethnic or other potentially discriminatory content.
- Information or symbols promoting political positions or actions.
- Information or symbols promoting religious beliefs, religious positions on an issue, or inspirational messages of a religious nature.
- Jokes and chain letters.
- Solicitation of commercial ventures, religious causes, outside organizations, or other non-job related solicitation.
- Copyrighted materials or proprietary information, or similar materials without prior authorization.

The E-mail system is property of Hillsborough County. All messages composed, sent, or received on the E-mail system are and remain the property of the County. Such E-mails are not the private property of any employee and E-mail confidentiality should not be assumed. Moreover, all E-mails are presumed to be subject to disclosure under Florida Statute §119.01, upon public records request. Employees shall not attempt to gain access to or use another employee's E-mail account without the latter's permission unless they are authorized by management to do so.