



Employee Policies BP 06-08

BOARD POLICY: INCIDENTAL PERSONAL USE OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES GUIDELINES

Rationale

There are many work-related situations that require the use of electronic resources, from the regular work we all do to situations that require great flexibility, immediate attention, prolonged duty or work from home during off hours. Some job classifications require access to electronic resources at all times by means of a variety of electronic devices, including cell phones, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers, computers, and email devices. The realities of the work environment require Gateway Community Charters (GCC) to acknowledge and address the use of GCC purchased electronic resources by employees for personal reasons.

The GCC guidelines on use of electronic devices must take into account the fact that the cost and pricing of these resources has changed in recent years. For example, rather than per minute charges for many telecommunications devices, there are now flat rates, fixed charges, mega minutes, and assorted discounting plans. These changes do not undermine the need to minimize personal use of GCC electronic resources, but do alter the analysis of such use.

Guidelines

Incidental Use Policies

The GCC recognizes that its employees may occasionally need to make personal use of GCC electronic resources and does not wish to prohibit such use altogether. The overriding principle that should govern personal use of these resources is that reasonable and incidental unofficial use of GCC electronic resources is authorized only so long as (i) the GCC incurs no additional cost from that use, other than the minimal cost incurred from ordinary wear and tear and the use of minimal amounts of ink, toner, or paper; and (ii) the use does not inappropriately interfere with official business. There are three broad categories of resources to which this principle applies.

1. Local Telephone Calls; E-mail; Internet Usage

The GCC incurs no additional fixed costs from a local telephone call, an e-mail, or Internet usage. Therefore, reasonable and incidental unofficial use of the equipment is permissible. This category includes the use of GCC cell phones that are subject to fixed price charges.

2. Fax; Copier; Printer

Sending or receiving a fax, printing a document, and making a copy on the copier can cause the GCC to incur a negligible cost from the use of paper, ink, and toner. Principals and staff must ensure that unofficial use of such equipment is kept to a minimum.

3. Long-Distance Telephone Calls; Cell phone calls

In situations where the GCC would incur an additional fixed cost from the unofficial use of GCC electronic resources (as with a long-distance call or cell phone call on a calling plan that is based on per-minute usage), the employee must either refrain from using the electronic resources for unofficial purposes, or ensure that the GCC incurs no additional costs (for example, by using a long distance calling card or prepaid phone card for long-distance calls).

Employees shall use GCC-provided electronic resources and services primarily for official business, but may make and receive personal communications, including telephone calls during business hours, that are necessary and in the interest of the GCC. Examples of personal communications that are in the interest of the GCC include: communications to alert household members about working late or other schedule changes; communications to make alternative child care arrangements; communications with doctors, hospital staff, or day care providers; communications to determine the safety of family or household members, particularly in an emergency; communications to make funeral arrangements; communications to reach businesses or Government agencies that can only be contacted during work hours; and communications to arrange emergency repairs to vehicles or residences.

*Incidental personal use of electronic resources must not adversely affect the performance of employee's official duties or the organization's work performance, must not be disruptive of co-workers, must be of limited duration and frequency and should be restricted to matters that cannot be addressed during non-duty hours.

To the extent an employee is forced by business circumstances to make personal use of GCC owned devices, such use should be incidental and immaterial. Appropriate reimbursement for any additional costs incurred by the GCC because of incidental use should be paid on a pro rata basis.

Examples of inappropriate uses of GCC electronic resources may include but are not limited to:

- Any personal use that could cause congestion, delay, or disruption of service to any GCC school or office. For example, electronic greeting cards, video, sound or other large file attachments to electronic communications can degrade the performance of the entire computer network, as can some uses of "push" technology, such as audio and video streaming from the Internet.
- Political use that is inconsistent with current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rulings.
- The creation, copying, transmission, or retransmission of chain letters or other unauthorized mass mailings, regardless of the subject matter, noting that the GCC Employee Handbook Use of Technology Acceptable Use Policy and District Technology Use Policy take precedence over these Guidelines.
- Use for commercial purposes, in support of "for-profit" activities or in support of other outside employment or business activity (e.g., commercial consulting for pay, sales or administration of business transactions, sale of goods or services).
- Any excessive use for personal or other non-official purposes.
- Accessing or transmitting pornography of any kind, obscene depictions, harmful materials, materials that encourage others to violate the law, confidential information or copyrighted materials.
- Criminal activities that can be punished under law.
- Selling or purchasing illegal items or substances.

It is a joint responsibility of Supervisors and staff to ensure that the incidental personal use of electronic resources is kept to a minimum. Supervisors are expected to monitor periodically for abuses.

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