

## USE OF COMMUNICATION DEVICES POLICY

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### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy provides guidance for the acceptable use by Councillors and Council employees of Wentworth Shire Council in relation to communication devices provided to Council and to ensure messages which document business activity are captured into Council's Electronic Records System (TRIM) to ensure they are managed as evidence of Council business.

Where communication devices such as mobile telephones, fax machines, email and the internet are provided by Council for business purposes, all Councillors and staff have a responsibility to ensure their proper use. Council staff and Councillors are to be efficient, economical and ethical in their use and management of such resources.

### 2. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

GM	General Manager
TRIM	Council Records Management System
FOI	Freedom of Information
IT	Information Technology

### 3. POLICY

#### Devices

This policy is mainly concerned with the following devices. The principles contained in this policy are however equally applicable to any other communication device provided by Wentworth Shire Council for business use.

- 1 Telephones
- 2 Facsimiles
- 3 Internet
- 4 Electronic Mail (email)
- 5 Facsimiles
- 6 Scanners
- 7 Photocopiers
- 8 Two-way Radios

#### 1. Economic Use

Councillors and staff are encouraged to use, where appropriate and available, free call services, tie lines and email. These generally provide more economical and efficient means of communication. Because all calls involving a mobile telephone are time charged, staff should keep short any communications involving a mobile telephone. This applies equally to calls made from standard desk telephones as well as calls from mobile telephones. Calls involving mobile telephones should be avoided where standard desk telephones are readily available.

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## 2. Security Context

- a) Messages conveyed through communication devices can be intercepted, traced or recorded. Although such practices are normally illegal, users cannot have an expectation of privacy. As such, confidential emails should not be sent without encryption.
- b) Information regarding access to Council's computer and communication system (including access codes) is considered confidential information and should not be divulged without authorisation.
- c) Users must not create or knowingly distribute a computer virus. If you receive an email from any source that indicates or implies that your computer has, or may have been infected with a virus, advise Council's Information Technology Officer immediately.
- d) In order to protect Councillors or staff from inappropriate, offensive or illegal content, Council retains the right to scan any email sent or received, whether it is of a business or personal nature.
- e) Scanned signatures may be used on Council documents.

### Records Management (Email System)

Electronic messages form part of the official business communication of Wentworth Shire Council, and as such, are governed by the same legislative requirements as all records.

#### *Individual Users*

- a) All electronic communications transmissions including email remain the property of Wentworth Shire Council.
- b) Electronic communications including emails (both internal and external) forms part of the official business communication of Wentworth Shire Council, as such email is governed by the same legislative requirements (State Records Act, FOI Act, Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act) as all Council records.
- c) It is the individual user's responsibility to save incoming and outgoing emails which relate to the business activities of the Council for capture by the Electronic Records System (TRIM). These messages should be captured in original format, contain details as to what the matter concerns, any advice given, details of relevant names or identifiers and relevant dates. These messages must be provided to Council's Records Officer for registration.
- d) Print, delete or archive all information only/personal emails on a minimal monthly basis.

#### *Corporate Records Manager*

Council's Corporate Records Manager is currently the Records Officer who is responsible for:

- a) promulgating awareness of electronic messages as State records
- b) articulating the requirements for capturing and maintaining electronic messages as records

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- c) identifying classes of electronic messages of substantive value for capture into recordkeeping systems.
- d) identifying classes of electronic messages of ephemeral value for disposal under normal administrative practice, and
- e) monitoring and auditing the capture and maintenance of electronic messages in recordkeeping systems.

#### *General Manager*

The General Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that Council's electronic messaging and recordkeeping systems comply with the requirements of the State Records Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 1989, Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998, and NSW Public Sector Code of Conduct.

#### *IT Officer*

The IT Officer has general responsibility for ensuring that electronic systems work reliably and effectively and support business requirements.

Responsibilities include:

- a) implementing appropriate security and protection measures for the transmission and storage of electronic messages
- b) carrying out the technical management of messages,
- c) monitoring and ensuring system reliability, including checking system generated transmission times.
- d) ensuring compliance with the NSW Record keeping Metadata Standard.
- e) ensuring that electronic messages remain accessible over time by ensuring that they are migrated across changes in software and hardware platforms, whilst retaining the original content, structure and context of the message.

#### **Personal Use of Communications Devices**

Limited personal use of communications devices is permitted, however users should ensure that such use is infrequent and brief. Further, using employer communication devices for activities that might be questionable, controversial or offensive (such as gambling, accessing chat lines etc) is prohibited.

#### **Unlawful Use**

The use of any telecommunications system to make or send fraudulent, unlawful or abusive information, calls or messages is prohibited. Staff who receive any threatening, intimidating or harassing telephone calls or electronic messages should immediately report the incident to their respective manager. Any staff member who initiates fraudulent, unlawful or abusive calls or messages may be subject to disciplinary action and possible criminal prosecution.

#### **Other Conditions of Use**

- a) Councillors and staff must not use the Council provided internet service to visit internet sites that contain obscene, pornographic, racist, sexist, inflammatory or

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- otherwise offensive is prohibited. Councillors and staff must not send, post or intentionally receive such materials.
- b) Individual users must not represent personal opinions as those representing Wentworth Shire Council (when in doubt seek and be guided by advice from Council’s General Manager).
  - c) Users must not download any software or electronic files without implementing approved virus protection measures.
  - d) Users must not reveal or publicise confidential or proprietary information, which includes but is not limited to: financial information, business and/or product details, databases and technical product information.
  - e) Users must not access or amend another person’s files or user name without explicit authorisation.
  - f) Access to Council’s internet and email facilities is limited to employees who have provided a signed copy of the Email and Web Browsing – Acceptable Use Agreement for placement on their personnel file and who have been given a user identification and password.

**Inspection and Monitoring of Email**

Council reserves the right, at any time and without the consent of the user, to inspect, monitor, examine, copy, store, forward, delete and disclose the contents of email messages. Only the General Manager and Council’s IT Officer may perform such procedures under strict disclosure conditions.

**Accredited Union Delegates**

Nothing in this policy over-rides the rights of accredited union delegates to use Wentworth Shire Council communication devices in accordance with the conditions contained within a properly constituted industrial instrument or other legislation.

**Breach of Communication Devices Policy and Guidelines**

- a) A breach of this policy constitutes a breach of Council’s Code of Conduct and may lead to disciplinary action.
- b) Staff must report any apparent breaches to their Manager or Director.

**4. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy may be amended from time to time and will be reviewed within four years of its adoption (or latest amendment) with reference to any relevant legislation and best practice guides.

**Authorisation:**

.....  
 Position:      **General Manager**  
 Date:    ...      ...../...../.....

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