

## APPENDIX B—ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS USE POLICY

### Section I: Introduction

- a. All County electronic systems (ES) are County property provided for the conduct of County business. Examples of ES are personal computers, laptops, telephones, electronic mail (email), voice mail, and Internet access software.
- b. County officials and employees should be aware that ES communications or records may be subject to examination or review for legal or work-related purposes.

### Section II: Confidentiality

- a. Access to County systems and software is limited to authorized personnel with appropriate passwords. The Information Technology Services Department (ITS) may require a list of passwords for use of some County systems.
- b. Officials and employees should not share passwords. If a password has been compromised, the official or employee should change it and, if necessary, notify ITS.
- c. Officials and employees must be aware that information sent over local networks or the Internet may not be secure and can present liability problems to personnel and the County.

### Section III: User Responsibilities

- a. Officials and employees must assume responsibility for the content and dissemination of their ES messages. Most County ES communications constitute official records under the Open Records Act and may be available to the public. Officials and employees must be professional and prudent in using ES for sensitive communications.
- b. (1) Software licensing is a serious legal issue. Improperly licensed software can result in serious legal liability for the County and for the individual. It is imperative that all software be accounted for, properly licensed, approved by ITS or Commissioners Court, and installed by ITS or under the direction or oversight of ITS. (2) Personal software is not to be installed on County computers. (3) County software, unless specifically authorized by ITS, and only in rare situations, is not to be installed on an employee's personal home computer. (4) Software upgrades are only to be installed on computers containing properly-licensed versions of the original software. (5) All software media and the associated licenses are to be stored under the direction and control of ITS. Any violation of this paragraph must be immediately reported to ITS.

- c. Abusive, harassing, bigoted, obscene, and profane messages are strictly prohibited. These communications can result in legal liability or other penalties for the individual and the County. County officials and employees must immediately report any incidents of the sort listed in this paragraph. The incidents should be reported to the County Attorney or the Human Resources Director.
- d. Officials and employees shall not read, view, or listen to other employees' ES communications without a legitimate business need.
- e. Officials and employees shall not send ES communications which exceed limits set by ITS. An official or employee may request an exception from the PIO or ITS and, if denied, may appeal to the County Judge. Sending multiple ES communications in order to circumvent the limit is a violation of this policy.
- f. Based on the business need to communicate with all County employees, certain departments have the authority to send ES communications to all email users. Those departments include Human Resources, Payroll, County Judge/PIO, and ITS.
- g. Any elected official or department head may designate one or more individuals within their own department to have authority to send ES communications to all employees within their own department even if the number of employees in that department exceeds the limit set.

#### Section IV: Personal Use of Internet

- a. Internet access is intended for official County business. Abuse of Internet access includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - 1. engaging in any unlawful or malicious activity;
  - 2. misrepresenting a personal communication as an official communication;
  - 3. sending a chain letter;
  - 4. sending, receiving, or accessing pornographic materials;
  - 5. using objectionable language;
  - 6. advertising personal items.
  - 7. using audio- or video-streaming to listen to the radio or watch television or videos over the internet.
  - 8. using county computers to make money or personal profit.
- b. Proper use of Internet access includes the following:
  - 1. downloading job-related information;
  - 2. sending and receiving job-related e-mail messages and file attachments;
  - 3. making business arrangements;
  - 4. searching job-related databases;

5. using the Internet for occasional, brief personal communications, where those do not violate any other provisions of this section or, in the view of officials and department heads, do not interfere with County business.

Section V: Legal and Disciplinary Action

- a. A violation of this policy may result in legal action and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.
- b. Misuse of County ES may also result in limiting and/or revocation of the user's access to e-mail, Internet, voice mail systems and other ES.

I hereby certify that I have read, understood, and agreed to comply with the Williamson County Electronic Systems Use Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date