

## POLICY/ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE/ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

SECTION: GENERAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES/DIRECTIVES	REFERENCE NUMBER: 506.09
SUBJECT: TECHNOLOGY SERVICES	INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/10/21
TITLE: E-MAIL USE BY BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBERS	LAST REVISION DATE:

### ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE:

The City provides electronic mail access to certain board and commission members (MEMBERS) at taxpayer expense for these members to use in performing their duties with maximal efficiency. It is not an individual entitlement, benefit or prerequisite of employment. Electronic mail (e-mail) is a resource made available to MEMBERS to efficiently communicate with individuals for the benefit of the City and to perform research beneficial to the missions and goals of the City. The unauthorized use of email addresses for purposes unrelated to City business is not only a productivity issue, but an impediment to the efficient use of the system for legitimate purposes. The City of Denton (City) has therefore established a directive with regard to proper use, access, and disclosure of electronic mail messages created, sent, or received by MEMBERS using the City's electronic mail system.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- The City maintains an electronic mail system that is provided and reserved to assist in conducting business at the City of Denton. The use of electronic mail for personal use is not allowed. However, MEMBERS may forward unsolicited-personal e-mail received at the City to a personal e-mail account.
- The electronic mail system is City property. Additionally, all messages composed, sent, or received on the electronic mail system are and remain the property of the City of Denton. Electronic mail messages are not the private property of any MEMBER.
- The City reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access, and disclose all messages created, received, or sent over the electronic mail system for any purpose, upon concurrence of the City Manager and the City Attorney, or their respective designees. The contents of electronic mail, properly obtained for legitimate business purposes, may be disclosed within the City without the permission of the MEMBER.
- The electronic mail system may not be used to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-board/commission-related solicitations.
- The electronic mail system is not to be used to create any offensive or disruptive messages. Among those which are considered offensive are any messages which contain sexual implications, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comment that offensively addresses someone's age, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability.

**POLICY/ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE/ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE (Continued)**

TITLE: E-MAIL USE BY BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBERS	REFERENCE NUMBER: 506.09
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- All electronic mail messages sent out by any MEMBER will reference an individual user name or ID that can be traced back to the sender. Electronic messages may not be sent out anonymously or from an identified group.
- The electronic mail system shall not be used to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, trade secrets, legally privileged information, or similar materials without prior authorization of the City Attorney or his or her designate.
- Texas law requires that all MEMBERS protect the integrity of the City's confidential information as well as the confidentiality of others. The confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased, it may still be possible to retrieve and read that message. Further, the use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality. Confidential information should never be transmitted or forwarded to other MEMBERS of any board/commission.
- Notwithstanding the City's right to retrieve and read any electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by other MEMBERS and accessed only by the intended recipient. MEMBERS are not authorized to retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not sent to them.
- MEMBERS shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored information. MEMBERS should not attempt to gain access to another MEMBER'S messages or send messages using another MEMBER'S identity. No MEMBER shall give permission to another MEMBER to "ghostwrite" e-mails.
- Any MEMBER who discovers a violation of this directive shall notify the City Secretary's Office immediately upon making such discovery.
- The use of electronic mail to violate any other City policies or directives is prohibited. Any MEMBER who violates this directive or uses the electronic mail system for improper purposes shall be subject to removal from the board/commission, such violation determined to be for cause in accordance with the Denton City Charter, Section 14.16. In addition, violations of this directive may be referred for criminal prosecution, where appropriate.
- Retention and deletion of e-mail messages and attachments are governed by the applicable Records Retention schedules maintained by the City Secretary.

All MEMBERS who use e-mail shall certify that they have read and fully understand the contents of this directive.

**CITY OF DENTON**  
**E-MAIL USE**  
**Acknowledgment**

As member of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the City of Denton, I, \_\_\_\_\_, recognize and understand all official business and correspondence related to my duties as a member must be sent and received using the City's e-mail system. I will not use any other email address to conduct official city business. The City's e-mail systems are to be used for conducting the City's business only. I understand the use of the e-mail system for private purposes is strictly prohibited with the exception of forwarding unsolicited personal e-mails received at my City address to my personal e-mail account. I understand I must also forward to my City email account any emails, text messages, images, or other electronic correspondence related to official City business received by me to any account other than my City email account. I will not forward, publish, or otherwise disclose any confidential City correspondence or confidential information to any outside email account, platform, or individual. Correspondence and information sharing within the scope of my position will be sent to others in my workgroup by using my City email address. Any request for documents, copies of emails, or copies of any other information from any individual not in my workgroup, organization, media entity, or business for City-related information in my possession or that I am authorized to access will be immediately sent to the City Secretary's Office for processing in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act. I will not respond to such requests on my own. Further, I agree not to access a file, delete, destroy, or retrieve any stored communication other than where authorized. I understand any e-mail messages I send will not be sent anonymously, from a group, or using another board member's identity without permission.

I am aware the City reserves and will exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access, and disclose all matters on the City's e-mail systems at any time, with or without employee notice, and such access may occur during or after working hours. I am aware use of a City of Denton-provided password or code does not restrict the City's right to access electronic communications. I am aware violations of this directive may subject me to removal from the board/commission I serve on, such violation determined to be for cause in accordance with the Denton City Charter, Section 14.16.

I authorize I have read and understand the City's directive 506.09: EMAIL USE. I authorize I have read, understand, and will follow all provisions in this notice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board/Commission Member Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

**PLEASE RETURN TO: CITY SECRETARY'S OFFICE**

[citysecretary@cityofdenton.com](mailto:citysecretary@cityofdenton.com)