

# NIAGARA FALLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

## General Order

<b>DATE:</b> 10/08/2014	<b>SUBJECT:</b>  <b>Use of the Internet/Social Networking</b>	<b>NUMBER:</b> 115.20
<b>RESCINDS:</b> 02/04/2011		<b>NUMBER OF PAGES:</b> <b>7</b>

I. Purpose:

- A. The Niagara Falls Police Department encourages use of the internet by its members in order to properly investigate cases, network with other law enforcement representatives and to obtain and provide accurate information for legitimate police purposes.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines governing each member's use of the internet and social media. These guidelines are set forth to assist members in their duties as well as prevent misrepresentations of themselves and the NFPD, or other inappropriate and unprofessional conduct.
- C. This directive provides guidelines for member conduct and does not absolve any member from reckless, negligent or improper conduct. Police service is inherently based on reasonableness. Members are expected to conduct themselves through electronic media in accordance with Niagara Falls Police Department Policy, Procedure and Rules and Regulations.

II. Policy

- A. Members of this department shall observe the following guidelines while using the internet:
  - 1. While on duty:
    - a. Members shall limit their internet use to those matters that pertain to the execution of their duties
    - b. Members of this department shall also adhere to the City of Niagara Falls Internet Policy and Guidelines.
  - 2. While on and off duty:
    - a. Members are reminded that their usage of the internet and social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter etc.) fall under the scrutiny of the public and member's representations on those sites should be made with the same professional and ethical guidelines set forth in NFPD Policies, Procedures, and Rules and Regulations.

- b. Inappropriate, unprofessional, vulgar or distasteful photos with or without members are prohibited.
- c. Comments and opinions regarding police activities, NFPD official activities, calls for service, or any other police business from this or any other police agency is prohibited.
- d. At no time shall NFPD members post or comment on an application of the use of force from this or any other police agency.
- e. Officers posting pictures should not appear in uniform.
- f. No photos or videos taken while on duty are to be posted on personal sites, to include and not limited to crime scenes, evidence, suspects, victims, police activities or officers.
- g. Recorded radio calls/transmissions or any other police related communications are prohibited.
- h. Posting official or unofficial police communications on personal sites is prohibited.
- i. The dissemination of police sensitive or confidential intelligence to non law enforcement personnel is prohibited.
- j. Information regarding ongoing investigations or court cases to non law enforcement personnel is prohibited.
- k. Any other inappropriate or potentially compromising activity is prohibited.

B. Review:

1. All use of the internet by members of this agency shall be subject to review by the Superintendent of Police and the Office of Professional Standards, whether on or off-duty.
2. This policy shall be implemented in conjunction with the existing City of Niagara Falls Internet Policy and Guidelines (attached Appendage A).

## **INTERNET Policies and Guidelines**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Internet is an interconnection of thousands of independently operated networks and computers across the globe. Its purpose is to facilitate the exchange of information enabling users such as the City of Niagara Falls employees to solve problems, gather competitive and regulatory data, communicate with others, and conduct research.

The City of Niagara Falls has implemented Internet access with the objective of providing a powerful tool that will improve overall productivity. However, with this new Internet service comes attendant risks. Since the Internet itself is largely an unregulated entity with access to vast services, people, sites, information and systems, the opportunities for abuse are numerous. This can lead to unwarranted exposure to litigation for the City, as well as potential negative effects on the availability and performance of our internal computer networks.

The City of Niagara Falls Internet Policies and Guidelines are intended to serve as a foundation for "acceptable usage" by City employees and thereby assist in managing the overall risks. However, the ultimate responsibility lies with the employee who must use the internet appropriately in conducting City business.

### **GENERAL POLICIES**

- Internet access will be provided for executive, management and other employees who, in the City's opinion, have a legitimate business need. Submission of a Login ID/Access Request Form, which is properly completed by the employee or their supervisor and approved by the department head, will initiate the process to implement Internet service for the employee. Data Processing will order and install the standard browser software and complete the connection to the Internet Access Provider.
- The City Internet access facility will be available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day unless there is a need for maintenance or upgrade to the connection. However it will be left to the discretion of the approving department head whether usage restrictions will be placed on an employee. Access privileges should reflect the nature of the expected usage and the requirements of the job function. Some job responsibilities will require access outside normal business hours and access to all available Internet sites. Access requirements must be specified on the Logan ID/Access Request Form.
- Internet access is a City resource to be used only for official City business. Employees must refrain from personal use, even during non-business hours.
- All connections to the Internet must be made via the centralized facilities, use the authorized browser software, and must pass through the protective security firewall maintained by MIS. This latter requirement is designed to minimize the chance of intrusions into The City of Niagara Falls networks by external parties. Connection through other means, involving other access providers, is prohibited.
- Internet communications which are intended to reflect an official City of Niagara Falls position must be reviewed and approved by appropriate user department management

before they are posted or released.

- The City of Niagara Falls reserves the right to examine any data or communications transmitted over the Internet connection, to restrict access to selected World Wide Web sites, newsgroups, and other services, and to cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies and other local, state and federal officials during the course of an Internet- related investigations .
- City employees must refrain from access, possession, or transmission of any material that may be considered pornographic, obscene, indecent, explicit, profane, violent, hateful, illegal, or unethical.
- Internet messages or postings by employees which may be considered defamatory, factually inaccurate, slanderous, an invasion of privacy or a violation of a trademark or copyright are expressly prohibited.
- Employees must refrain from sending, receiving or posting of copyrighted materials or intellectual property, e.g. software, text and pictures, unless expressly permitted by the author.
- All communications and transmissions made from the City Internet facilities will identify The City of Niagara Falls as the source of the message. However, the City of Niagara Falls will not be held liable for the actions of anyone using the Internet access facilities. Employees must realize that they assume full legal responsibility for their communications and activities.

Usage of the Internet E-mail must comply with existing City guidelines for internal communications. Of particular importance for messages sent over the public Internet are:

- E-mail messages are to be considered City records and can be used in courts of law and regulatory proceedings .
- Electronic communications are not private, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Sensitive or confidential messages should clearly be labeled as confidential. Such messages should only be sent to those with a need to know.
- The City of Niagara Falls reserves the right to disclose any electronic mail message to law enforcement officials or other third parties.
- Transmission of chain letters, inappropriate humor, or offensive, obscene, or pornographic material is expressly prohibited. Broadcast messages to lists or individuals and any other type of use which would cause congestion of the internal or external networks are considered to be an abuse of the Internet connection and in violation of City policies.
- Violations of the City of Niagara Falls policy relative to sexual harassment or racial and ethnic discrimination will be severely dealt with.

- It is the employee's responsibility to manage his/her E-mail messages such that requirements for server disk space and network administration are kept to a reasonable level. Timely deletion of unneeded files and E-mail is recommended.
- Personal Web servers/pages are prohibited.

### **FTP (File Transfer Protocol)**

- Software is not to be downloaded unless there is departmental management approval, MIS management approval and all purchasing and licensing requirements are satisfied. If software is copied or transmitted without such authorization, it represents a potential violation of copyright, trademark, and patent laws for which the City will not provide indemnity.
- Files obtained from sources outside the City, including disks brought from home; files downloaded from the Internet, news groups, bulletin boards, or other online services; files attached to E-mail; and files provided by customers or vendors may contain dangerous computer viruses that may damage the City's computer network. Employees should never download files from the Internet, accept E-mail attachments from outsiders, or use disks from non-City sources, without first scanning the material with City-approved virus checking software. If you suspect that a virus has been introduced into the City network, notify the MIS Department immediately.
- Downloaded files are to be copied only to the user's local drive and not to a network drive. Before such a file is moved to the internal network, it must be virus scanned in accordance with established procedures.
- Downloading of very large files (over 300KB) or a large number of smaller files should be accomplished outside normal business hours so as not to overload the internal networks.

### **NEWSGROUPS/CHAT**

- Real-time communications, such as chat rooms, are generally inappropriate for business use and should be avoided.
- Access to newsgroups can generate high volumes of network traffic and should be used judiciously.
- A disclaimer must be used when posting to newsgroups stating, in effect, that the opinions are the users and not those of the City of Niagara Falls. This is necessary because posting will be coming from a City of Niagara Falls Internet address and could

be construed as an official City statement.

### **SECURITY and ACCESS PRIVILEGE**

- Employees are responsible for keeping their passwords (and encryption keys, if applicable) secure. In no case should they be revealed or communicated over the Internet.
- Access to other networks over the Internet by City of Niagara Falls employees carries with it the requirement to comply with all of the usage policies of the hosting organization.
- The use of the City of Niagara Falls Internet access facilities should be considered a privilege and not a right. This privilege is given with the expectation that employees will demonstrate consideration and respect for other users and voluntarily comply with City usage guidelines. Inappropriate usage of Internet facilities or violation of these policies and guidelines may result in the revocation of access. The City may also take disciplinary action, when an employee violates the Internet Policies and Guidelines.

**City of Niagara Falls**  
**INTERNET Policies and Guidelines**  
**Acknowledgement Form**

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the City of Niagara Falls Internet Policy and Guidelines and have read this document thoroughly.

I understand that my use of the City's system constitutes my consent to all the terms and conditions of that policy.

In particular, I understand that:

1. The system and all information transmitted by, received from, or stored in that system are the property of the City of Niagara Falls.
2. The system is to be used only for business purposes and not for personal purposes.
3. I have no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of the City's E-mail system or the Internet or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information in that system.

I agree not to access a file or retrieve stored communications unless authorized. I acknowledge and consent to the City's monitoring my use of the E-mail system and the Internet at any time at its discretion, including printing and reading all E-mails entering, leaving, or stored in the system.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 1/8/2004