



## **BOROUGH OF HANOVER**

**ADOPTED FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY** **FOR NON-UNIFORMED PERSONNEL**

The Borough supports the use of technology by employees to serve the community most efficiently. With that technology, comes the availability of material which may not be considered appropriate for the workplace or may distract from providing essential public services. It is important that employees use their time at work for business purposes. Employees are not blocked from access to social networks on Borough computers because, under some circumstances, social media is a powerful business tool that can be used to gain positive attention to the Borough and to connect to the community; however, use of technology and access to such websites must follow this policy.

#### **COMPUTERS & INTERNET SERVICE USAGE BY EMPLOYEES:**

Computers and internet service are provided as a means to accomplish business objectives in a secure and timely manner, while adhering to the following basic guidelines:

- Borough owned computers and internet service are for business use only.
- The Borough may access any information created, transmitted, or stored on its information systems.
- Copying or downloading software of any kind is prohibited without prior permission.
- Email accounts provided to employees are for business use only.
- Any email, text, or instant message of an offensive, pornographic, or otherwise inappropriate nature, is prohibited and violations will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Instant messaging or chat features may be provided to ease communication between employees – non-business use is prohibited.
- Please be aware that if an employee uses a personal electronic communication device while at the same time using the Borough's wi-fi system that the employee has no right to privacy with respect the record of their internet use or what they send, receive or access while using the Borough's wi-fi system. All use of an employee's system while using the Borough's wi-fi must be accordance with the Borough's policies.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & SOCIAL NETWORKING:**

Under this policy, social media refers to any activity that involves interaction in online communities, including all social networking or affinity web sites, chat rooms, blogs, personal websites, and online bulletin boards, whether or not they are maintained by the Borough, as well as all other forms of electronic communications. This interaction includes, but is not limited to, browsing profiles and photos, reading messages sent through social networking forums, and participating in instant messaging services.

A social networking site is any website that links individuals electronically and provides a forum where users can connect and share information. These websites can be tailored to specific interests or to certain types of users. Examples of popular social networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The list of social networking sites is constantly growing and changing.

To assist employees in their use of social media, the Borough has established this policy for the appropriate use of social media when communicating online, and to make proper disclaimers that they are speaking only for themselves as private citizens. Nothing in this policy however is intended will limit the First Amendment right of free speech of any person.

Please note that activities that occur on social media outside of an employee's work hours may be the basis for disciplinary action if there is a sufficient nexus to work or where they violate the Borough's policies.

## **PROHIBITED USE**

While the Borough has no intention of controlling employee actions outside of work, employees should practice caution and use discretion when posting content on the internet. Employees have the right to use social media for personal expression on their own time, and the Borough will not violate employee privacy by attempting to access content that has not been made available publicly.

The following actions are prohibited during working hours:

- Using social media sites to conduct personal or non-Borough business, including browsing, using a Borough owned computer or device.
- Reading email alerts regarding social networking account activities or using Borough email to correspond with personal contacts.
- Updating information, uploading photos, or otherwise engaging with one's personal social media profile for non-business purposes with a Borough owned or personal computer or device.
- Micro-blogging, the practice of publishing your recent whereabouts, thoughts, or activities to a social media site, on a Borough owned or personal computer or device.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY EMPLOYEES:**

1. Employees have an obligation to attempt to resolve workplace issues, concerns, or disputes with Borough management prior to publicly posting to social media. Nonetheless, when posting online, if an employee decides to post complaints or criticisms, employees are asked to avoid any statements, comments, photographs, videos or audio which reasonably could be viewed, interpreted or construed as malicious, obscene, pornographic, threatening, intimidating, which disparage residents, elected officials, coworkers, or vendors or which may constitute harassment or bullying. Some examples of this inappropriate online conduct include offensive or derogatory posts which are meant to intentionally harm a person or the Borough's reputation, contribute to a hostile environment on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, ethnic origin or any other status protected by law or the Borough's equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination policy.
2. Prior to posting any document received from the Borough, please verify that it does not contain any private information about any resident, elected officials, coworkers, or vendors who live or have business within the Borough.
3. Please do not distribute any e-mails received from Borough employees or from other public officials, because informal e-mail correspondence may be misunderstood by the public when read outside of its original context.
4. Do not utilize the Borough's seal for any commercial or personal gain.
5. Never post any unconfirmed information or rumors about the Borough, public officials, fellow employees, residents, suppliers or vendors of the Borough.
6. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Borough. If the Borough is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear that while you are an employee of the Borough, your views do not represent those of the Borough, Borough Council, fellow employees, residents, suppliers or others working on behalf of the Borough. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects connected to the Borough, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the Borough. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Borough." A general disclaimer on an employee's social media page suffices.
7. Do not use Borough email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.
8. Please be advised that all Borough, state and federal ordinances apply including laws pertaining to labor relations and laws prohibiting harassment, discrimination and retaliation which apply with equal force to conduct occurring on-line.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Violations of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Borough's progressive disciplinary policy. Serious violations of this policy may result in:

- Termination of employment
- A civil action to recover the costs of investigating and documenting any violation of this policy.

**Questions Regarding this Policy.** Any questions regarding this policy or any other Borough employee policy may be directed to the Borough Manager or Human Resources Manager.

*Date of Adoption by Hanover Borough Council: February 16, 2022*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, *an employee of the Borough of Hanover, hereby*

*Print Name*

*acknowledge that I have received and understand this policy.*

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*Signature & Date*