Effective Date:	**April 19, 2002**		
Date Reviewed:		**Reviewed by:**	

POLICY

Cancels:	**DRS-ISD-1 (8/23/2001)**	**Sponsor:**	**Assistant Director of ISD**
See Also:	**DRS-ISD-2** **DRS-ISD-1 App A**	**Approved by:**	**Shannon Marshall**

DRS-ISD-1 USING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

This policy establishes both permissible and prohibited use of state-owned electronic communication systems by DRS employees.

DRS employees are responsible for using state-owned electronic communication system resources in an ethical, lawful, responsible, and non-discriminatory manner. As set forth in this policy, each DRS employee will take responsibility for communications generated, responded to, sent, or posted to the Internet under his or her ID.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy:

Electronic communication systems (ECS): ECS include, but are not limited to, any electronic media that is used to generate, transmit, display, reproduce, or store communications for business purposes. Such electronic media include: personal computers, portable laptop computers, software, e-mail systems, telephones, cellular phones, voicemail systems, facsimile (fax) machines, other electronic message systems which store and transmit communications, including the Internet and related resources.

Internet: Internet means the connection to and use of interconnected networks in the public and private domains to access the World Wide Web, e-mail, file transfer protocols, and other state network resources.

1. Permissible Use Established

In accordance with WAC 292-110-010, permissible use of ECS is defined as communications that is reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties.

Permissible use of ECS is broken into three categories:

- Business;
- Agency-approved activities; and
- Authorized, limited (de minimis) personal use per WAC 292-110-010.

Approved 5/10/02

The purpose of the agency ECS is to support agency business activities. A DRS employee may make occasional but limited personal use of state e-mail and Internet resources if subject matter is not related to activities listed as prohibited and:

- There is little or no cost to the state;
- Does not interfere with the performance of official duties;
- Is brief in duration and frequency;
- Does not distract from the conduct of state business; and
- Does not compromise the security of state information or software.

Personal use of e-mail and Internet is limited to five minutes or less and should be infrequent, not every day.

Personal use of e-mail distribution lists is prohibited.

Examples of permissible e-mail and Internet use are given on the Washington State Executive Ethics Board Web site www.wa.gov/ethics.

2. Prohibited Use Established

As set forth in WAC 292-110-010 and this policy, ECS uses are subject to the following prohibitions:

- Prohibited to use in promotion of outside business interests;
- Prohibited to support, promote, or solicit for any outside organization, charity, or group unless provided for by law or authorized by an agency head or designee (DRS requires authorization by an agency head or designee);
- Prohibited to use to promote personal political beliefs or religious affiliations;
- Prohibited to use to promote harassment (see DRS-HR-2 Preventing Workplace Harassment);
- Prohibited to infringe copyrights;
- Prohibited to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, marital status, religion, sex, national origin, Vietnam-era or veteran's status, age, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation (see DRS-HR-EEO/AA-2 Discrimination);
- Prohibited to promote unlawful activity; or
- Prohibited to use to access, transmit, display, chat, or post on the Web or use the Internet for reasons or practices other than authorized business use related to assigned job duties, except permissible uses stated in section 1 of this policy.

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Examples of prohibited e-mail and Internet use are given on the Washington State Executive Ethics Board Web site www.wa.gov/ethics.

3. **Employees and Supervisors Complete Form to Document Understanding of This Policy**

DRS employees who use the Internet will complete the "Use of the DRS Internet Access Acknowledgment Form" and obtain supervisory approval. This will document their understanding of appropriate and authorized use as described in this policy before being granted access to the Internet for business use related to assigned job duties.

4. **Employees Responsible to Maintain Security**

DRS will take appropriate measures to provide ECS that are secure for business purposes. However, all users should be aware that electronic message systems are vulnerable to interception and to security violations. In an attempt to maintain security of data created, received, stored, etc., on ECS, DRS employees are responsible to:

- Establish and protect confidential passwords and/or access codes that are used to gain access to ECS (e.g., network ID, e-mail, voice mail, screensaver);
- Access only messages intended for their review; and
- Notify the appropriate supervisor if they believe their password or access code has been compromised and immediately change the password/code.

Supervisors are responsible to ensure proper employee use of ECS. Supervisors may access any communication system used by an employee to carry out business functions and may request a log of activity if necessary.

5. **Take Appropriate Precautions When Using Electronic Communication Systems**

Employees need to take appropriate precautions before requesting or transmitting privileged information and messages. Disclosure of privileged information may occur unintentionally or inadvertently when an unauthorized user gains access to electronic messages. Disclosure may also occur when messages are forwarded to unauthorized users, directed to the wrong recipient, or printed in a common area where others can read the messages.

Employees should be aware that it is possible for those outside state government to identify them as visitors to an Internet site. Employees should always exercise conservative judgment in selecting the sites they visit when accessing information on the Internet.

When using Internet services, employees should be aware that certain electronic documents, which potentially include e-mail messages composed or transmitted

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on the DRS network or the Internet, may, constitute public records. Public records must be retained in accordance with RCW and WAC requirements and may be disclosed to requesters (See DRS LEGAL 3 Requests for Public Disclosure of Agency Records).

6. Downloading Software Or Files Via The Internet For Personal Use Is Prohibited

Downloading of business related software or files must be arranged through the Help Desk. (See policy DRS-ISD-ITS-5 Installing, Registering, Licensing And Managing Software On Agency Owned Computers.)

7. Information Is Stored According to Established Standards

DRS will maintain information stored on ECS in accordance with retention schedules approved by the Office of the Secretary of State and the agency.

The Internet is a public communications medium. Monitoring capabilities exist within the agency, at DIS, and by anyone else who chooses to monitor Internet traffic. Monitoring of ECS will be carried out by DRS' Information Services Division. This activity includes logging of message content and recording all Internet sites visited. Reports of site access logs will be reviewed for inappropriate usage, which will be reported to the ISD Assistant Director for action.

DRS may restrict employee use of, or limit access to, the Internet using gateways and proxy servers, by group or on an individual by individual basis.

8. Violation of This Policy May Result in Disciplinary Action

Violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Approved 5/10/02