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Reed 11/4/03

Date: October 28, 2003

Approved: _____
SAM S. REED
Secretary of State

POLICY ON USE OF STATE RESOURCES

Authority

- 42.52 RCW (Ethics in Public Service Act)**
- WAC 292-110-010 (Use of State Resources Rule)**
- OSOS Network Use Policy**
- OSOS Policy Against Harassment**
- OSOS Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedures**
- OSOS Policy on Preventing Workplace Violence**

APPROVED
Executive Ethics Board
Date: 1/12/04

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth guidelines defining the limits of permitted uses of state resources by employees and volunteers of the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS).

Applicability

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of the Office of the Secretary of State.

Overview

State resources and equipment shall be used in a manner consistent with state law and, except to the extent explicitly permitted by this policy, only in support of the goals, objectives and operation of the Office of the Secretary of State. The personal use of state resources for private benefit or gain is prohibited by the Office of the Secretary of State, the Ethics in Public Service Act, RCW 42.52 et. seq., and WAC 292-110-010 (Use of State Resources Rule), with limited exceptions. This policy applies to the use of any state resources, including staff, telephones, copiers, fax machines, computers, office supplies, vehicles and other OSOS equipment. The exceptions in this policy are intended to be narrow and must be in compliance with WAC 292-110-010 and the Ethics in Public Service Act. Attached is a Q and A from the Executive Ethics Board giving examples of permissible and impermissible activities.

Policy

1. State resources used to conduct official state duties.

Any use of state resources reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties does not violate RCW 42.52.160 or OSOS policy.

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The following personal private uses of state resources are prohibited (applies as well to equipment removed from state facilities):

- Conducting a personal outside business or private employment;
- Promoting or engaging in discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, age, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or veteran status;
- Engaging in any activity prohibited by OSOS Policy Against Harassment;
- Transmitting or viewing material with sexual content;
- Conducting political campaigns or other personal political use;
- Engaging in gambling or other activity resulting in personal gain;
- Supporting, promoting or soliciting on behalf of an outside organization;
- Buying, selling, or advertising a product unless it is job related; or,
- Promoting or engaging in any illegal activity.

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7. Charitable activities meeting conditions defined in this policy are permissible.

An example of a permissible activity would be a work unit soliciting funds to help a colleague or the colleague's family member suffering from a serious illness, or organizing a group of volunteers to spend a Saturday performing a particular charitable or public service. An example of an impermissible activity would be an employee sending a broadcast e-mail selling a product or raising funds benefiting a particular cause or organization of interest to them personally. (This does not, however, foreclose employees posting notices of charitable solicitation or fundraisers on bulletin boards or in break areas.)

8. Violation of policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination and/or appropriate legal action. Exact disciplinary measures will be consistent with OSOS standard policies and practices and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Procedures:

Responsibility:

All Employees and Volunteers

All Supervisors

Assistant Secretary of State,
Deputy Secretary of State,
Division Directors, or designees

Action:

Be familiar with and comply with the parameters of this policy and related policies (see Authority section above).

Ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of this policy and ensure compliance to the extent possible.

Answer questions related to appropriate use.
Approve/deny specific uses upon request.

Approve use of state resources per policy statement 2 above.

11/04/2003

Date: 1/12/04

2. Uses related to official state purposes, but not employee's/volunteer's official duty, are permitted.

The use of state resources that is reasonably related to an official state purpose, but not to an employee's or volunteer's official duty, is allowable only if it is authorized in writing by the Assistant Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State, Division Director, or designee. An example is conducting the agency's combined fund drive. The written authorization shall contain guidelines for the permitted use.

3. Occasional and limited personal use of state resources is permitted.

In accordance with WAC 292-110-010, state employees or volunteers may make very limited personal use of state resources that supports organizational effectiveness and does not undermine public trust and confidence as determined by OSOS management. The attached Q&A from the Executive Ethics Board gives examples of permissible and impermissible uses. Employees and volunteers may make occasional and limited use of state resources only if the following conditions apply:

- There is little or no cost to the State;
- Any use is brief in duration, occurs infrequently, and is the most effective use of time or resources;
- The use of state resources does not interfere with the performance of the employee's or volunteer's official duties;
- The use does not disrupt or distract from the conduct of state business due to volume or frequency;
- The use does not disrupt other state employees or volunteers and does not obligate them to make a personal use of state resources; and,
- The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state information or software.

4. Questions concerning appropriate use directed to Supervisors.

Employees who wish to use specific state resources and who are uncertain about whether it is permitted under these guidelines, should discuss the matter first with a supervisor. Employees may request explicit approval from a supervisor regarding a particular use of state resources. If an employee or supervisor has any doubt about whether a contemplated use is allowable, the best guidance would be to opt not to use.

5. Internet access using OSOS equipment is permitted under OSOS policy, Policy on OSOS Network Use.

OSOS employees or volunteers may use OSOS computers and other equipment to access the Internet provided the use conforms to WAC 292-110-010, OSOS Network Use Policy, and this policy. Employees or volunteers have no expectation of privacy in the use of these resources.

6. 6 Explicit prohibitions on personal private use of state resources exist.