

SPOKANE COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT 8

Policy

**P10.12.04
Computer, Electronic
Communications, and
Internet Usage**



Adopted: 10/19/2015

Board Chair:

Commissioner:

Commissioner:

Purpose: This policy provides the guidelines for the use of Fire District computers, and the use of the Fire District computer system by Fire District personnel or employees. It specifically governs the use of Spokane County Fire District 8 computers and the Fire District computer system for emails, files, data, software, images, voice mails, text messages, electronic communications, and stored electronic communications. This Policy also clarifies employee expectation of privacy as it relates to the workplace use of computers, emails, files, data, software, images, voice mails, text messages, social media, electronic communications, and stored electronic communications.

To the extent that District issued cellular telephones, personally owned cellular telephones, personally owned computers, and other District issued or personally owned electronic devices utilize the Fire District computer system for access to the intranet and/or internet, this policy shall be fully applicable.

Policy: It is the policy Spokane County Fire District 8 to provide personnel with the tools they need to safely and efficiently do their jobs by leveraging technology to the maximum extent possible, while at the same time protecting the District's professional image and reputation.

It is further the District's policy to educate and inform personnel and employees about the proper purposes for which the computer system may be used, and to set forth the criteria and grounds for which employees or personnel may be disciplined for improper use of the computer system.

1. Definitions.

- a) **Electronic Device:** A computer, cellular telephone, desk telephone, smartphones, personal data assistant (PDA), pager, two-way paging device, iPad, iPod, Nook, Kindle, or similar device capable of sending and receiving an electronic communication.
- b) **Electronic Communication:** Any transfer of signs, signals, writings, images, sounds, data or intelligence that is created, sent, forwarded, replied to, distributed, broadcast, stored, held, copied, downloaded, displayed, viewed, read, printed, or otherwise transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo-optical system. This term expressly includes, but is not limited to, emails, attachments to emails, text messages, instant messages, recorded voicemail messages, web sites visited, computer files, data files, and live or recorded streaming

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video or audio sent over the intranet or Internet, or sent by wired or wireless communication.

- c) **Stored Electronic Communication:** Any temporary or intermediate storage of a wire or electronic communication incidental to the electronic transmission thereof; any storage of an electronic communication for purposes of backup protection of such communication; and any other storage, retention, backup, or archiving of an electronic communication, whether accident, incidental or purposeful, utilizing an electronic storage medium.
 - d) **Internet:** The world-wide system of interconnected computer networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks linked by a broad array of electronic and optical networking technologies.
 - e) **Intranet:** The Fire District's internal computer system and network.
2. **Use of Computer, Email, Internet and Electronic Communication Systems.**
- a) Spokane County Fire District 8 computer system, including all Fire District issued computers, laptops, notebooks, tablets, electronic devices, hardware, the intranet, and access to the Internet provided by the Fire District, are owned by the Fire District. The use of such systems, equipment and access is conditioned upon employee consent to the terms of this policy.
 - b) Fire District computer system, computers and hardware, the intranet, and access to the Internet provided by the Fire District, may not be used by employees for personal gain, including personal businesses, but rather is available to enhance the service that the fire district provides to the public.
 - c) Spokane County Fire District 8 reserves the right to examine, monitor, intercept, review, copy, store, save, and forward to third parties any and all electronic communications sent or received over the Fire District computer system, or electronic device as well as any stored electronic communication or other files stored on a Fire District computer, hard drive, memory device, or storage medium. The failure of the District to exercise its rights under this section, shall not constitute a waiver of these rights.
 - d) Fire District personnel or employees are advised that they have no expectation of privacy in any electronic communication, stored electronic communication, file, image, sound, message, web site visited, or other action or activity while working on a Fire District computer, or while using any other computer, cellular telephone, or electronic device that is accessing the Fire District computer system, including while accessing the Internet through the Fire District computer system.
 - e) Fire District personnel or employees are advised that they have no expectation of privacy in any electronic communication, stored electronic communication, file,

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image, sound, or message contained on a portable memory device such as a hard disk, flash drive, memory card, CD-ROMs, DVD, or other media that is attached to/accessible by a Fire District computer, or is attached to/accessible by an electronic device that is accessing the Fire District computer system.

- f) Fire District personnel or employees are responsible for any information that they view, access, generate or distribute through the Fire District computer system or electronic device.
 - g) Fire District personnel or employees are required to prevent the unauthorized use of the Fire District electronic device and for that reason shall use password protected screen savers or other appropriate techniques while away from their computer. Any use that occurs on a personnel or employee's workstation under that personnel or employee's login is presumed to be performed by that personnel or employee. You must log off the computer when not using it, and before leaving the computer unattended. Login and password information shall not be displayed near District computers.
 - h) The encryption of files or electronic communications and the use of encryption programs are not permitted without the prior written approval of the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
 - i) No software will be installed on any Fire District computer systems or electronic device without prior written approval of the Fire Chief or his/hers designee.
 - j) The unauthorized installation, use, storage or distribution or copyrighted software or materials using the Fire District computer system, servers, laptops, desktops is prohibited. This includes copyrighted software or materials contained on any storage medium and duplicated using District CD-writer drives or other storage devices.
3. Email and Internet and Electronic Communications.
- a) Only Fire District personnel or employees are allowed access to the District e-mail system.
 - b) Fire District personnel or employees should not use their Fire District e-mail account as their primary personal e-mail address.
 - c) Incidental or occasional use of District e-mail for personal reasons is permitted.
 - d) The following e-mail and Internet and electronic communication is prohibited:
 - i. Accessing, or trying to access, another user's e-mail account.
 - ii. Obtaining, or distributing, another user's e-mail account.
 - iii. Viewing, emailing, sending or distributing sexually explicit pornographic, racist, sexist, or material based on race, origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or political beliefs.
 - iv. Using e-mail to harass, discriminate, or make defamatory comments.

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- v. Sending or forwarding of jokes, junk mail, chain letters and other non-work related items unless authorized by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.
- vi. Transmitting District records within, or outside, the District without authorization.
- vii. Advertising political activities which benefit one political candidate or party.
- viii. Advertising purely commercial activities or events.
- ix. Any activities which are inconsistent with the mission of the Fire District.
- x. Any illegal activities.

You are reminded that email messages and any or all documents and electronic communications may be subject to public disclosure under the current laws of the State of Washington, and may be discoverable during litigation. *Assume anything sent over or stored on the Fire District system will be viewed by the public.*

You are required to report inappropriate use of e-mail, internet or any other electronic communication means to the Fire Chief or his/hers designee or through the chain of command.

4. Confidentiality.

- a) Fire District personnel routinely handle information that is considered to be confidential under federal and state law. This includes information relative to incidents, investigations, patients, and employees, and may include confidential personal information, financial information, and medical information. The following conduct is prohibited when dealing with confidential information:
 - i. Forwarding or sending confidential information to someone not authorized by law to receive it;
 - ii. Printing confidential information to a printer in an unsecured area where documents may be read by others;
 - iii. Leaving a computer unattended with confidential files logged on, accessible, or visible;
 - iv. Leaving computer disks or memory media with confidential data unattended, in easy to access places.

5. Disciplinary Action.

- a) Violation of the District's guidelines for the appropriate use of Computer, Electronic Communications and Internet Usage Policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's disciplinary policy and the applicable guidelines.