

RULE 9 – Computing Use and Ethics

This policy covers all employees in the classified and unclassified service as defined in the Gila County Merit System Rules and Policies Manual without regard to regular, temporary, part-time, probationary or emergency status, although nothing in this policy waives the at will status of an unclassified employee. **To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and e-mail usage may be monitored at any time. Employees have no expectation of privacy when using County-provided equipment.**

9.1 Conditions of Use.

- A. To protect the integrity of Gila County's computing facilities and the users thereof against unauthorized or improper use of those facilities, the County reserves the right, without notice, to limit or restrict any individual's use, and to inspect, copy, remove or otherwise alter any data, file, or system resource which may undermine the authorized use of any computing facility. The County also reserves the right to periodically authorize specific personnel to check any of the County's computer systems and any other rights necessary to protect its computing facilities. The County disclaims responsibility for loss of data or interference with files resulting from its efforts to maintain the privacy and security of those computing facilities.
- B. As used herein and in the policy on computing ethics below, the term "computing facility" means, refers to and includes any and all forms of computer-related equipment, tools and intellectual property, including computer systems, personal computers and computer networks and all forms of software, firmware, operating software and application software, which is owned by Gila County or is under the County's possession, custody or control. Users of the County's computing facilities are required to comply with and, by using any such facilities, agree to comply with and be subject to the Gila County Policy on computing ethics and these conditions of use. The County reserves the right to amend these conditions and policies at any time without prior notice.

9.2 Policy on computing ethics.

- A. Several users share the computing facilities of Gila County. These facilities must be used responsibly by everyone, since misuse by even one individual has the potential to disrupt County wide business. You are therefore required to exercise responsible, ethical behavior when using the County's computing facilities. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. You must use only those computer resources which you have been individually authorized to use by your immediate supervisor. The unauthorized use of computer resources, as well as the providing of false or misleading information for the purpose of obtaining access to County computing facilities, is prohibited and may be regarded as a criminal act and treated accordingly by the County. You must not use County computing facilities to gain unauthorized access to computing facilities of other institutions, organizations or individuals.
2. You may not authorize anyone to use your computer accounts for any reason. You are responsible for all use of your accounts. You must take all reasonable precautions, including password maintenance and file protection measures, to prevent use of your account by unauthorized persons. You must not, for example, share your password with anyone else.
3. You must use your computer resources only for the purposes for which they were authorized. For example, accounts may not be used for private consulting. You must not use your computer resources for unlawful purposes, such as the installation of fraudulently or illegally obtained software. Use of external networks connected to the County's networks must comply with the policies of acceptable use promulgated by the organizations responsible for those networks.
4. You must not access, alter, copy, move or remove information, proprietary software or other files (including programs, members of subroutine libraries, data and electronic mail) without prior authorization from the appropriate departmental supervisor or his/her designee. You must not copy, distribute, display or disclose third party proprietary software without prior authorization from the licensor. Proprietary software must not be installed on systems not properly licensed for its use.
5. You must not use any computing facility irresponsibly or needlessly affect the work of others. This includes transmitting or making accessible offensive, annoying or harassing material; intentionally, recklessly or negligently damaging any system; intentionally damaging or violating the privacy of information not belonging to you; intentionally misusing system resources or allowing misuse of system resources by others; or loading software or data from untrustworthy sources, such as free-ware, on to administrative systems.
6. You are encouraged to report any violation of these guidelines by another individual and any information relating to a flaw in or bypass of computing facility security to your immediate supervisor or his/her designee.

9.3 Internet Usage

- A. Internet access to global electronic information resources on the World Wide Web is provided by Gila County to assist employees in obtaining work-related data and technology. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure responsible and productive Internet usage. All Internet usage is limited to job-related activities. Personal use of the Internet is not authorized.
- B. All Internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via our computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of Gila County and, as such, is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the business information contained in Internet e-mail messages and other transmissions is accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.
- C. The equipment, services, and technology provided to access the Internet remain at all times the property of Gila County. As such, Gila County reserves the right to monitor Internet traffic, and retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through our online connections and stored in our computer systems.
- D. Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any employee or other person. Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law. The unauthorized use, installation, copying or distribution of copyrighted, trademarked, or patented material on the Internet is expressly prohibited. As a general rule, if an employee did not create material, does not own the rights to it, or has not obtained authorization for its use, it should not be put on the Internet. Employees are also responsible for ensuring that the person sending any material over the Internet has the appropriate distribution rights.
- E. Internet users should take the necessary anti-virus precautions before downloading or copying any file from the Internet. All downloaded files are to be checked for viruses; all compressed files are to be checked before and after decompression.
- F. Abuse of the Internet access provided by Gila County in violation of law or Gila County policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy. The following behaviors are examples of previously stated or additional actions and activities that are prohibited and can result in disciplinary action:
 - 1. Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, or threatening messages or images;
 - 2. Using the organization's time and resources for personal gain.

9.4 Computer and E-mail Usage.

- A. Computers, computer files, the e-mail system, and software furnished to employees are Gila County property intended for business use. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and e-mail usage may be monitored.
- B. Gila County strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, Gila County prohibits the use of computers and the e-mail system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.
- C. E-mail may not be used to solicit others for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-business matters.
- D. Gila County purchases and licenses the use of various computer software for business purposes and does not own the copyright to this software or its related documentation. Unless authorized by the software developer, Gila County does not have the right to reproduce such software for use on more than one computer.
- E. Employees may only use software on local area networks or on multiple machines according to the software license agreement. Gila County prohibits the illegal duplication of software and its related documentation.
- F. Employees should notify their immediate supervisor, the Personnel Director or any member of management upon learning of violations of this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- G. The unauthorized or improper use of the Gila County facilities, including the failure to comply with the above guidelines, constitutes a violation of County policy and will subject the violator to disciplinary and/or legal action by the County, and, in some cases, criminal prosecution. In addition, the County may require restitution for any use of service which is in violation of these guidelines.
- H. Any questions about this policy or of the applicability of this policy to a particular situation should be referred to the Manager of Information Technology or his/her designee.