

COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

SAMPLE

This Communications Policy Sample is designed as a guide for use by members of the Employers' Chamber of Commerce (CECC). It is part of a suite of resources to help businesses put in place effective practices and procedures for their organisations.

Please be aware that no generic document can cover all circumstances and that you may need to adapt this to the needs of your business.

If you need further assistance with putting this resource into effect, or with other employment or business issues, please call the CECC Advisers on 03 366 5096.

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XYZ COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1) Purpose:

- a) This policy statement, in conjunction with your employment agreement, forms part of your conditions of employment and sets out requirements to be observed by all employees covering the use of:
 - Email
 - Internet and Social Media
 - cell phones
 - company statements/media releases
- b) All employees are expected to become and remain familiar with the terms of this policy which may be subject to amendment from time to time at the sole discretion of the employer following consultation with employees.
- c) It is very important that employees understand and remember that all communications with clients, customers and suppliers – and amongst each other - reflect positively upon the reputation and standing of the company. *As such the company requires that you adhere at all times to the requirements and standards set down in the policy and that you understand that the company will hold you accountable for any breaches including the taking of disciplinary action where appropriate.*

2) Amendments:

The company shall consult with employees prior to making any changes to this Policy. Any changes shall be communicated in writing.

3) Email & Internet:

- a) Email and internet facilities are an integral part of our communications. As such they are first and foremost considered as business tools used by certain employees for the purpose of carrying out their ordinary duties.
- b) Employees should be aware that the company routinely monitors the use of its email and internet facilities for the purpose of ensuring compliance with its policies and objectives. The company may also carry out further checks if it believes that the facilities are being misused i.e. for purposes not expressly permitted by the terms of this policy or otherwise expressly approved by your manager. No employee should have any expectation of privacy when using the company's email or internet facilities.
- c) The company **does/does not** permit access to its email and internet facilities for personal use **[provided such access is occasional, confined to meal and rest breaks and does not disrupt others from working].**



- d) Before sending any emails employees should ensure that the tone and content reflect the values of this organisation and project a high degree of professionalism. Remember that using an email is not a reason to adopt overly casual and ambiguous language: it remains a formal communication and all the usual safeguards that would be taken when writing a letter should be observed when writing emails too.

Do

- Be accurate
- Be effective
- Use the spell-checker
- Use your electronic signature
- Always read emails before sending them. Check – do they clearly achieve the purpose for which they were written? Are they free of ambiguity? Do they convey a measured and professional tone? Have you ensured that they will not cause unintended offence to the reader? If in doubt; correct!

Don't

- Use offensive or defamatory language
- Mislead or deceive the recipient
- Be overly familiar – remember, this is a formal business communication
- Be verbose – keep emails concise and on-point but deal thoroughly with the subject matter.
- Send, display or distribute pornographic or sexually oriented emails
- Send, display or distribute anything that may reasonably be considered as offensive to any person, whether or not it is likely to be viewed as such by the recipient.
- Send an email in anger

- e) Internet use – some staff may be required to use the internet in the course of their ordinary duties. Others will not be required to do so but may still have access to the internet via their work PC or some other work-provided interface. *Downloading electronic files, including applications, (except where required and authorised for business purposes) is strictly prohibited.* Accessing or downloading material from the following websites is prohibited:

- Pornographic or sexually oriented sites
- Sites containing offensive words or images, even if intended to be humorous
- Gambling
- File sharing
- Any copyright material in breach of its copyright terms
- Sites promoting or expressing views which tend to promote racial or religious intolerance



- f) Viruses, scamming and phishing – be alert and if in *any* doubt whatsoever, do **not** open any email attachments or links, respond to or download any suspicious content. Treat with a high degree of caution any emails, particularly those with attachments or links, from persons unknown to you. Never attempt to bypass or wholly rely upon the company's installed anti-virus software. If in any doubt about the legitimacy of any communication seek direction from [your supervisor or designated IT person].
- g) **Copyright (Infringing File Sharing) Amendment Act 2011**– Employees' attention is drawn to this Act which, amongst other things, makes the unauthorised downloading of copyright material an offence. Significant penalties can be awarded against offenders by the Copyright Tribunal and ultimately even the withdrawal of internet facilities. Any employees acting in breach of this policy and found to be downloading material in breach of copyright shall be subject to disciplinary action. Furthermore the company will expect to recover any fines awarded against it as a result of this activity from the individual concerned.

4) Social Media:

- a) For the purposes of this policy statement the term 'social media' shall include but not be limited to any web based forums in which subscribers or casual users are offered the opportunity to exchange thoughts or opinion on any manner of topics. Without limiting the term, it shall be deemed to include participation with sites such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube etc. and the practice of blogging in general.
- b) Interaction in any form with social media sites whilst using company facilities and/or during working hours is [not permitted] OR [permitted only to the extent set out in this policy – refer 4 d)].
- c) At ALL times regardless of when or where you interact with social media sites you should be careful to refrain from taking any action which could undermine our employment relationship. You must not:
- make any derogatory comments about the company, its products or services, your colleagues or our customers/clients;
 - disclose any personal information about colleagues without their written consent;
 - disclose any confidential information relating to this business or our clients however acquired.
- d) [OPTIONAL] Limited use during working hours: Insofar as it is reasonably necessary for the completion of your normal duties, access to and interaction with social media is permitted subject at all times to the restrictions set out in c) above. Such use shall be confined to that which positively reflects upon this organisation, its clients and employees.

OR



[insert appropriate policy detailing restrictions around use of social media during working hours and/or using company facilities]

- e) Any breach of this policy shall be regarded as serious misconduct. It undermines the essential trust and confidence that must exist between employer and employee and will invoke disciplinary action.

5) Cell Phones and other hand-held devices:

- a) At the Company's discretion certain employees may be issued with cell phones or other hand-held communication devices where their role makes this desirable.
- b) Employees issued with cell phones must ensure that they are operated in accordance with safe practice at all times. When driving, either a hands-free kit must be used or alternatively employees may only initiate or receive calls when the vehicle is stationary and not required to move e.g. the phone or other device is not to be operated whilst the vehicle is temporarily halted at an intersection.
- c) [OPTIONAL] Private use of the cell phone or other device is **not permitted/ permitted on the following terms:**

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6) Company Media Statements:

No employee shall volunteer or comply with a request to make any statement to the media unless first authorised to do so by the Chief Executive.

