

COMMISSION POLICY

POLICY #5.1

SUBJECT: Electronic Information, Communications,
& Technology Resources –
Use, Transmission, & Storage

DATE ADOPTED
February 19, 2008

PAGE (BCC MINUTES)
Page 26

OBSOLETE VERSIONS *(Can be found in the Inactive Policy Book.)*

DATE ADOPTED
February 17, 1998

PAGE (BCC MINUTES)
Book 20, pg. 117

NOTE: (CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD POLICY AND PROCEDURE DOCUMENT) -- A policy is typically a document that outlines specific requirements or rules that must be met. The overall goal is to write policies that are clear, concise and in simple language. If you use an acronym, spell it out the first time you use it.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy governs the use of all Electronic Technology Resources belonging to or used by Baldwin County. It includes, but is not limited to, all computer systems of any size and their attached peripherals, diskettes, magnetic tapes, CDs, DVDs, e-mail systems, telephone systems, voice-mail systems, fax systems, cellular telephones, pagers, software, network resources, and Internet resources. This policy shall apply to all persons who use the County's Electronic Technology Resources, including but not limited to employees, independent contractors, and agents of the County. **The use of the term employee within this document will likewise include all persons who use the County's Electronic Technology Resources.**

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENT

1. Employees shall not use the Electronic Technology Resources except as required by their job responsibilities as employees of Baldwin County. Employees shall not use the Electronic Technology Resources, or any part thereof, to conduct any commercial activities separate from the business activities of Baldwin County. In addition, an employee shall not use the Electronic Technology Resources in connection with any other employment, including self-employment, of the employee.
2. No employee shall have exclusive use over the Electronic Technology Resources or any part thereof. No employee shall treat the Electronic Technology Resources, or any part thereof, as his or her personal property. Employees who desire to use the Electronic Technology Resources for limited, occasional or incidental personal use do so with the understanding and agreement that any information transmitted through or stored in the Electronic Technology

Resources, (including, but not limited to, e-mail messages), and any printed data there from, will be considered by Baldwin County as business information of Baldwin County. Employees shall treat the Electronic Technology Resources like a “shared-file system”; with the expectation that files sent, received, or stored anywhere within the system will be available for view and other uses by any authorized representative of Baldwin County. Furthermore, any employee whose use of the Electronic Technology Resources interferes with his or her, or other employees’, job performance or ability to perform assigned task when due, or results in any damage to the Electronic Technology Resources or other property of Baldwin County, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3. Baldwin County reserves the right, in its sole discretion; to access, review, copy, modify, print or delete all information transmitted, used, or stored in the Electronic Technology Resources for any purpose it deems necessary. The County also reserves the right to disclose all such information to the members of the Baldwin County Commission, the County Administrator, the Personnel Director, or other persons designated by the County Administrator based upon a need to know, and otherwise as provided by applicable laws or regulations. The above information may also be used by Baldwin County in disciplining an employee, in the course of any grievance proceedings and any legal proceedings in which the above information is relevant.
4. Employees shall not use the Electronic Technology Resources or any other means of communication or equipment to engage in activities that are in violation of any federal or state law, or that are in violation of any policy of Baldwin County. The use of the Electronic Technology Resources for the transmission of defamatory, obscene, offensive, harassing messages or messages that disclose confidential or personal information without prior written authorization is strictly prohibited. To ensure that employees comply with these policies, or applicable law, Baldwin County may conduct periodic audits of the Electronic Technology Resources; including without limitation, individual personal computers, diskettes, CDs, DVDs, or backup tapes. The failure of any employee to comply with the terms of this Policy may result in disciplinary action, including and up to termination.
5. Confidential information received in the course of employment should never be transmitted or forwarded to individuals, agencies or other entities that are not authorized to receive the confidential information or to other employees of Baldwin County who do not require the knowledge of the information in order to perform their job responsibilities.
 - a. Employees shall exercise reasonable care in addressing e-mail messages to make sure that messages are not sent to persons who are not the intended recipients or to incorrect addresses. In particular, employees who use distribution lists should examine the list to make sure that all listed persons are appropriate recipients of the information and that their addresses are current.
 - b. No employee should routinely forward messages containing confidential information received by or accessed by Baldwin County to multiple parties, unless all recipients are authorized to receive the information individually.

6. Employees shall under no circumstances copy, print, or forward to others outside Baldwin County any messages (or the contents thereof) sent to, or received from, the attorneys in the Baldwin County Legal Department or any other attorney who has represented or is representing Baldwin County. Employees shall not copy, print, or forward to others inside Baldwin County any messages (or the contents thereof) sent to, or received from, the attorneys in the Baldwin County Legal Department or any other attorney who has represented or is representing Baldwin County without first receiving written authorization from the subject attorney. Failure to comply with the provisions of this paragraph shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
7. It is the intention of the Personnel Department to ensure that all personnel files are accurate, relevant, and safe from improper disclosure.
 - a. Current and former employees have the right to inspect and copy the information in their files. Individuals will be given access to their files only after he or she has made written request for the inspection or copying. An employee's personnel file will only be made available for his or her review and/or copying in the presence of the Personnel Director, or his or her designee in the Personnel Department, at a mutually convenient time and place.
 - b. Internal access to a personnel file must be approved by the Personnel Director and is limited to supervisors and managers who are considering the employee for a promotion, transfer, or other personnel related action. The circumstances must represent a legitimate and verifiable need to know specific information about the employee.
 - c. Baldwin County reserves the right to verify basic information such as employment status or job title without notifying the employee.
 - d. Employees who question the accuracy or completeness of information in their files should discuss their concerns with their Appointing Authority, Department Head, or supervisor as the case may be. The County will consider the objections of any employee and remove any erroneous or improper information.
8. Except in cases in which explicit authorization has been granted by County Management, employees are prohibited from engaging in, or attempting to engage in:
 - a. Monitoring or intercepting the files or electronic communications of other employees or third parties.
 - b. Obtaining access to systems or accounts they are not authorized to use.
 - c. Hacking systems or accounts.
 - d. Using other people's log-ins or passwords.
 - e. Breaching, testing, or monitoring computer or network security measures.

- f. Connecting unauthorized equipment to the County network, such as Wireless Access Point, personally owned computers, etc.
 - g. Running or installing games on County computers.
 - h. Running or installing peer to peer file sharing programs on County computers.
 - i. Running or installing unauthorized software on County computers.
 - j. Copying of any software from County computers, for other than backup/archiving purposes.
 - k. Using the County resources to access, transmit, store, display, or request obscene, pornographic, erotic, profane, racist, sexist, or other offensive material (including messages, images, video, or sound).
 - l. Using County resources for personal gain or for the advancement of a political or religious belief.
 - m. Sending e-mail or other electronic communications that attempt to hide the identity of the sender or represent the sender as someone else.
9. Resource security must be maintained, and employees shall take all reasonable precautions, including: safeguarding their passwords, changing passwords on a regular basis, maintaining physical security around County equipment, and logging off or locking unattended workstations. At the end of the day the employee should log off the workstation. (This does not mean that it should necessarily be powered off). An employee logged onto a computer is responsible for any activity that occurs from within that account or on that computer during that sign-on.
10. Electronic media and services should not be used in a manner that is likely to cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of other people to access and use the system. This includes but is not limited to non business uses of: listening to Internet radio, accessing streaming audio or video, downloading MP3 files or videos, sending or forwarding group broadcasts of messages such as chain/spam type e-mails.
11. Anyone obtaining electronic access to other companies' or individuals' materials must respect all copyrights and cannot copy, retrieve, modify, or forward copyrighted materials except as permitted by the copyright owner.
12. All work related messages, e-mails, and files created or transmitted using County Electronic Technology Resources may be considered public records of the County. Appropriate records retention policies **must** be followed.
- a. The retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the sub-functions to which the records belong. The *Alabama County Commissions Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority* document is what will be used to determine the correct retention period and further defines the record title

and sub-functions. The *Alabama County Commissions Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority* document can be found by going to <http://bmsps/Commission/default.aspx>

- b. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure these policies are followed.
13. Employees can use encryption software supplied to them by the systems administrator for purposes of safeguarding sensitive or confidential business information. Employees who use encryption on files stored on County Electronic Technology Resources must provide their supervisor with a sealed hard copy record (to be retained in a secure location) of all of the passwords and/or encryption keys necessary to access the files.
 14. THE BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION recognizes that participation in some forums might be important to the performance of an employee's job. For instance, an employee might find the answer to a technical problem by consulting members of a news group devoted to the technical area.
 - a. Employees should include the following disclaimer in all of their postings to public forums:

"The views, opinion, and judgments expressed in this message are solely those of the author. The message contents have not been reviewed or approved by THE BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION."
 - b. Employees should not rely on disclaimers as a way of insulating THE BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION from the comments and opinions they contribute to forums. Instead, employees must limit their discussion to matters of fact and avoid expressing opinions while using THE BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION'S systems or a BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION-provided account. Communications must not reveal information about THE BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION processes, techniques, trade secrets, or confidential information and must not otherwise violate this or other BALDWIN COUNTY COMMISSION policies.

RELATED POLICIES

Use, Transmission, and Storage of Electronic Information by Baldwin County Employees
(Located in the "Baldwin County Commission Employee Handbook")