

Information Technology Use

321.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the proper use of department information technology resources, including computers, electronic devices, hardware, software and systems.

321.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Computer system - All computers (on-site and portable), electronic devices, hardware, software, and resources owned, leased, rented, or licensed by the Fargo Police Department that are provided for official use by its members. This includes all access to, and use of, Internet Service Providers (ISP) or other service providers provided by or through the Department or department funding.

Hardware - Includes but is not limited to computers, computer terminals, network equipment, electronic devices, telephones (including cellular and satellite), modems, or any other tangible computer device generally understood to comprise hardware.

Software - Includes but is not limited to all computer programs, systems, and applications, including shareware and firmware. This does not include files created by the individual user.

Temporary file, permanent file, or file - Any electronic document, information, or data residing or located, in whole or in part, on the system including but not limited to spreadsheets, calendar entries, appointments, tasks, notes, letters, reports, messages, photographs, or videos.

321.2 PRIVACY EXPECTATION

Members forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to emails, texts, or anything published, shared, transmitted, or maintained through file-sharing software or any internet site that is accessed, transmitted, received, or reviewed on any department computer system.

The Department reserves the right to access, audit, and disclose, for whatever reason, any message, including attachments, and any information accessed, transmitted, received, or reviewed over any technology that is issued or maintained by the Department, including the department email system, computer network, and/or any information placed into storage on any department system or device. This includes records of all keystrokes or web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network. The fact that access to a database, service, or website requires a username or password will not create an expectation of privacy if it is accessed through department computers, electronic devices, or networks.

321.3 POLICY

It is the policy of the Fargo Police Department that members shall use information technology resources, including computers, software and systems, that are issued or maintained by the Department in a professional manner and in accordance with this policy.

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321.4 RESPONSIBILITY

The City of Fargo Information Services (IS) Department shall be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the various networks and systems on behalf of the Fargo Police Department. The IS Department will act as the liaison with the appropriate representatives regarding the City of Fargo's network or Internet access.

321.5 AUTHORITY

The IS Department has the authority and responsibility to conduct random monitoring to ensure compliance with the City of Fargo's Electronic Communications policy regarding all electronic communications. The Department and the IS Department reserve the right to remove a user account from the network due to violations of this policy or the City of Fargo policy, and to restrict a user from sending or receiving e-mail. The Department also reserves the right to block an e-mail account from sending e-mails into the City of Fargo network if it deems the sender's e-mail interferes with department operations or is deemed inappropriate.

Refer to City of Fargo Employment policy 200-016, Electronic Communications.

321.6 INSPECTION OR REVIEW

A supervisor or the authorized designee has the express authority to inspect or review the computer system, all temporary or permanent files, related electronic systems or devices, and any contents thereof, whether such inspection or review is in the ordinary course of his/her supervisory duties or based on cause.

Reasons for inspection or review may include, but are not limited to, computer system malfunctions, problems or general computer system failure, a lawsuit against the Department involving one of its members or a member's duties, an alleged or suspected violation of any department policy, a request for disclosure of data, or a need to perform or provide a service.

The IT staff may extract, download or otherwise obtain any and all temporary or permanent files residing or located in or on the department computer system when requested by a supervisor or during the course of regular duties that require such information.

321.7 RESTRICTED USE

Members shall not access computers, devices, software or systems for which they have not received prior authorization or the required training. Members shall immediately report unauthorized access or use of computers, devices, software or systems by another member to their supervisors or Shift Commanders.

Members shall not use another person's access passwords, logon information and other individual security data, protocols and procedures unless directed to do so by a supervisor.

321.7.1 SOFTWARE

Members shall not copy or duplicate any copyrighted or licensed software except for a single copy for backup purposes in accordance with the software company's copyright and license agreement.

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To reduce the risk of a computer virus or malicious software, members shall not install any unlicensed or unauthorized software on any department computer. Members shall not install personal copies of any software onto any department computer.

When related to criminal investigations, software program files may be downloaded only with the approval of the Information Services (IS) staff.

No member shall knowingly make, acquire or use unauthorized copies of computer software that is not licensed to the Department while on department premises, computer systems or electronic devices. Such unauthorized use of software exposes the Department and involved members to severe civil and criminal penalties.

Introduction of software should only occur through IS staff as part of the automated maintenance or update process to department or City-approved or installed programs by the original manufacturer, producer or developer of the software.

Any other introduction of software requires prior authorization from IS staff and a full scan for malicious attachments.

321.7.2 HARDWARE

Access to technology resources provided by or through the Department shall be strictly limited to department-related activities. Data stored on or available through department computer systems shall only be accessed by authorized members who are engaged in an active investigation or assisting in an active investigation, or who otherwise have a legitimate law enforcement or department-related purpose to access such data. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by a supervisor.

321.7.3 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS USE

With multiple work shifts, work groups, and members working at different locations, it is impractical to relay all information via face-to-face communications. Therefore, we must use the various forms of communications to disseminate information within the Department. The following are expectations regarding the use of voice-mail, e-mail, and other internal communications:

- (a) Voice-mail, e-mail, and your individual mailbox/inbox should be checked at least once during your work shift.
- (b) Individual mailboxes should be regularly purged.
- (c) Employees shall use the "out of office" notification for voice-mail and e-mail when taking ten (10) consecutive days of vacation or more, or if you are going to be away from work for five (5) or more consecutive workdays.
- (d) Command officers are expected to be accessible via department cell-phone unless they have made prior arrangements to have another command officer assume their responsibilities.
- (e) Non-exempt employees, unless specifically required by the nature of their assignment or status, are not required to access or monitor department communication systems

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such as voice-mail, e-mail, and cell-phone messaging (text and voice-mail), while off-duty.

321.7.4 INTERNET USE

Internet access provided by or through the Department shall be strictly limited to department-related activities. Internet sites containing information that is not appropriate or applicable to department use and which shall not be intentionally accessed include but are not limited to adult forums, pornography, gambling, chat rooms, and similar or related internet sites. Certain exceptions may be permitted with the express approval of a supervisor as a function of a member's assignment.

Downloaded information from the internet shall be limited to messages, mail, and data files.

321.7.5 OFF-DUTY USE

Personal use of technology resources, such as department owned cell phones, may be permissible if limited in scope and frequency, if in conformance with other provisions of this policy, and if not connected with a profit making business enterprise or the promotion of any product, service, or cause which has not received prior approval from a command officer.

Refer to the Personal Communication Devices Policy (701) for guidelines regarding off-duty use of personally owned technology.

321.8 PROTECTION OF SYSTEMS AND FILES

All members have a duty to protect the computer system and related systems and devices from physical and environmental damage and are responsible for the correct use, operation, care, and maintenance of the computer system.

Members shall ensure department computers and access terminals are not viewable by persons who are not authorized users. Computers and terminals should be secured, users logged off, and password protections enabled whenever the user is not present. Access passwords, logon information, and other individual security data, protocols, and procedures are confidential information and are not to be shared. Password length, format, structure, and content shall meet the prescribed standards required by the computer system or as directed by a supervisor and shall be changed at intervals as directed by IT staff or a supervisor. Passwords for accounts that access CJI are governed by the CJIS Access, Maintenance, and Security Policy (808).

It is prohibited for a member to allow an unauthorized user to access the computer system at any time or for any reason. Members shall promptly report any unauthorized access to the computer system or suspected intrusion from outside sources (including the internet) to a supervisor.

321.9 REVISION DATE 01/20/2026