



# TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

<b>Policy No.</b>	HR-10.35
<b>Policy</b>	Use of Computing and Electronic Resources
<b>Date</b>	November 20, 2009

## 1. Purpose

Tacoma Housing Authority's (THA's) computer and electronic systems are provided at agency expense to assist employees in carrying out the agency's business. These systems allow users to create and store data, share data and files and communicate with others. This policy regulates the use of these systems to ensure they further agency purposes while accounting for incidental personal use. THA reserves the sole discretion to define the acceptable use of its computer and electronic systems.

## 2. Sources for Policy

Chap. 42.17 RCW Public Disclosure Act

## 3. Scope of Policy

This applies to all THA employees.

## 4. Who is Responsible for Implementing Policy

Who	Responsibilities
<i>All staff</i>	All staff should conform to this policy.
<i>Supervisors</i>	Supervisors should monitor their staff's compliance with this policy.

## 5. Definitions

Computer System	Includes individual desktop computers (PCs), E-mail system, internet access, laptop computers, printers, thumb drives, tapes, file servers, and all other components of the agency's computer network.
Network	THA's group of interconnected computers. .
Share Drive, Shadow Drive and Departmental Drives	Computer drives containing content for internal use.
Email	Includes any electronic message, whether internal or external, whether sent to or from facilities, equipment or systems of the agency.
Internet	A global system of interconnected networks including their protocols and resources including but not limited to: The World Wide Web, E-Mail, NewsGroups, (FTP) File Transfer Protocol, IRC Chat, and TELNET.
Download	The operation of establishing a connection to a host computer via the Internet and utilizing FTP (File Transfer Protocol) to copy the file from the host to your own computer. Examples are downloading a screen saver, word document, computer game,

	and graphic files.
Web Browsing	Use of a browser tool to access Web sites on the Internet.
Streaming Audio	Technology used to “play” audio/video on a PC over a network. Can be used for music, voice, lectures and other audio/video material. It generally consists of a continuous stream of data coming from a network.

## **6. Forms Associated with this Policy**

[No entry]

## **7. Policy**

### **7.1 Scope of Use**

THA computer system and phone system and other communication devices are intended for business use only.

### **7.2 Security and Confidentiality**

Because confidential data and information is stored on THA’s data storage system, all employees are expected to assist in maintaining the confidentiality of such data.

No staff may attempt to inappropriately access information which is not necessary or useful for their job duties.

No staff shall send e-mail or other electronic communications that hides or misrepresents the identity of the sender or of THA.

### **7.3 No Expectation of Privacy; Ownership of Data; Monitoring**

#### *7.3.1 No Expectation of Privacy*

Electronic communications, computer use, electronic data storage or downloads are not in any way private when THA equipment is accessed or used. THA may monitor or review all such communications and usage. In addition, the content of such communication may be a “public record” available for public disclosure, subject to certain exceptions as provided by law. Files containing personal information of any employee as a result of the employee making incidental use for personal purposes, including transmission of personal E-mail messages, will be treated no differently than other business files and information. Accordingly, employees should not use the computer system to send, receive or store any information that they wish to keep private.

#### *7.3.2 Ownership of Data*

All documents and data that a THA employee creates or stores on the computer system for business related purposes are the property of THA.

### 7.3.3 *Monitoring*

- (a) At any time, THA may monitor and review an employee's uses of the computer system and the information it creates, stores, or transfers including but not limited to PDA's, cell phones, voicemail, data communications, phone invoices, web searches, call times, length of time on the internet, employee's electronic files, file downloads, file transfers and messages and usage.
- (b) THA will not monitor private telephone conversations without consent or court order.
- (c) IT staff not pursue or access email or electronic files of THA staff unless:
  - (i) Expressly asked to do so by an employee on his or her own behalf;
  - (ii) Expressly asked to do so by the Human Resource Director, Deputy Executive Director or Executive Director;
  - (iii) As part of IT's daily maintenance and monitoring of the agency's computer systems, including monitoring and review for general compliance with this policy.

### 7.4 **Appropriate Use**

The agency's computer systems may be used by employees for agency business.

### 7.5 **Incidental Personal Use Permitted**

THA staff may use THA's computer system for occasional, incidental personal use only if:

- (a) The use does not interfere with employee job duties, agency operations or productivity and does not cause any harm or embarrassment to THA or other staff;
- (b) The use does not hamper network performance;
- (c) The use complies with this policy.

Any personal use of THA's computer system should be on the employee-user's own time.

### 7.6 **Inappropriate Use**

Use of the agency's computer systems to engage in any communication which violates federal, state, or local laws, codes, and regulations, agency policies and procedures is strictly prohibited at all times.

In addition, the following uses of the agency's computer systems are prohibited at all times unless there is a legitimate business need. That need must be conveyed to and the use authorized by the employee's department director in writing prior to such use:

- (a) Personal commercial use or for personal gain;
- (b) Accessing pornographic, sexually explicit or indecent materials including materials of a bawdy, risqué or coarse nature, or any other offensive or morally questionable materials;
- (c) Usage for any type of harassment or illegal discrimination including transmission of obscene or harassing messages to any other individual;
- (d) Gambling;
- (e) Usage for any unethical activity that could adversely affect THA;
- (f) Recreational purposes including the loading of computer games;
- (g) Usage which precludes or hampers agency network performance;
- (h) Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material;
- (i) Usage which violates software license agreements;
- (j) Transmission of confidential, sensitive or proprietary information to unauthorized persons or organizations;
- (k) Attempting to make unauthorized entry to other agency systems or to other networks.
- (l) Due to the adverse effect that streaming audio has on network performance, employees may not access streaming audio except for legitimate agency business only and then with prior supervision approval. No personal access to streaming audio on agency systems is allowed at any time.
- (m) Use of chat links or any instant messaging;
- (n) Use that is likely to cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of other people to access and use the system;
- (o) Use that violates copyright.

#### **7.7 Transmitting E-mail to "THA All" Group**

Employees are prohibited from sending electronic mail to all other employee-users through the use of the "THA All" address group unless expressly authorized by management to do so. THA all emails related to agency wide events are allowed.

#### **7.8 Web Browsing/Internet Access**

The Internet is a great storehouse of information and contains resources that can greatly enhance our ability to deliver cost-effective services to our customers.

The agency encourages use of the Internet for legitimate business-related or professional activities.

**7.9 Software**

All software purchases must be processed by the IT division. Games that are inherent to installed software will be allowed at the supervisor's discretion (e.g., Windows' solitaire game). All other games are prohibited. Shareware and Freeware not provided by the IT division are not authorized, and may not be downloaded or used as they may be incompatible or cause problems within the agency's computer systems. Software purchased for agency use will not leave the facility unless the software license covers off-site use. Permission must be obtained from the IT division for check-out of authorized off-site software.

**7.10 Copyrights**

Software is to be used within the constraints of the license or copyright agreements, i.e., software purchased for a specified system or specified number of systems may only be used on those designated systems. Use of the computer system to copy and/or transmit any software programs, documents, or other information protected by the copyright laws is prohibited by federal law and may subject you and the agency to civil and criminal penalties.

**7.11 Viruses**

Agency-approved virus checking software is installed and always running on all desk-top PCs. Staff should never disable this software.

**7.12 Violations of Policy**

Violations of this policy subject the responsible staff person to corrective action, discipline and/or termination.