



## Internet Usage Policy (June 6, 2023)

Internet Usage Policy (Approved June 6, 2023). This policy applies to all Town employees except for those in the Police Department. The Police Department has its own policy in this regard, which has specialized stipulations due to the nature of their work.

### I. PURPOSE:

All Town technology resources are the property of the Town and are provided to enable employees and officials to provide services in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. Employee access to computers, smartphones and network resources imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is granted subject to relevant local, North Carolina, and Federal laws. Any activity, use or action that is inconsistent with this Policy is prohibited. Because technology resources are constantly evolving, the Town requires all employees and officials to use a common-sense approach to the rules set forth in this Policy, complying with the letter and spirit of this Policy.

### II. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

#### A. Use of Resources:

1. The term “resources” refers to Town-owned devices connected to Town-owned network resources and personal devices connected to Town-owned wireless resources. Town computer, email, network, and wireless resources are provided to employees to assist the employee in performing assigned work for the benefit of the residents of North Wilkesboro and coworkers.
2. Resources should be used for Town business only, with the exception of incidental personal use or an emergency situation.

#### B. Privacy of all Employees:

1. Employee privacy is preserved by the Town to the greatest extent possible. Electronic and other technological methods must not be used to infringe upon privacy.
2. Employees should utilize such systems at their own risk and with awareness that Town computer and other technological resources are not to be treated as personal computer and technological resources.

#### C. Ownership of Data and Information:

1. All forms of data stored or transmitted on or with Town computer and network resources are the property of the Town.

#### D. Freedom from Harassment and Common Courtesy:

1. No employee of the Town may use Town-owned devices or resources of any kind to libel, slander, or harass any member of the public. Employees must conduct themselves honestly and appropriately on the Internet. Employees must also respect copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, and the prerogatives of others. Unlawful or inappropriate usage may garner negative publicity for the Town, expose the Town to significant legal

liabilities, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination for the employee. The following internet specific restrictions apply:

### III. INTERNET USE

- A. The use of any Internet based instant messaging systems is prohibited.
- B. The use of Internet “chat rooms” or “news groups” is prohibited.
- C. A Town of North Wilkesboro provided e-mail system is the only e-mail software allowed to be used on Town equipment. The use of Internet based e-mail systems is prohibited (i.e., Hotmail, Yahoo Mail, Netscape Mail, etc.).

### IV. EMAIL AND OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic communication provides a useful way to exchange ideas, share files, and maintain relationships with coworkers and members of the community. Messages sent and received through Town network resources, including wirelessly, may be considered property of the Town. This includes but is not limited to email and social media sites. The Town’s equipment and resources include but are not limited to cellular phones, telephones, tablets, computers and laptops, and network resources, including wireless resources. They should not be used to communicate sensitive or confidential information.

### V. PERSONAL USAGE WHILE AT WORK

Town resources may not be used in connection with compensated outside work or for the benefit of individuals or organizations not related to the Town of North Wilkesboro, except in connection with official Town activities. Incidental and short duration personal use of Town computer and network resources, including wireless connection, is authorized, provided such use occurs on the employee’s own time and such use is legal, ethical, does not compromise the Town’s reputation or the public’s confidence in the Town as an organization, and does not compromise the Town’s networks and systems. Any incidental use must not interfere with an employee’s ability to perform their official duties and must not interfere with other users’ access to resources.

### VI. TOWN WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

Town website(s) and official social media pages endorsing or promoting services, entities, or products not sponsored by the Town is not allowed unless the Town Manager or their designee authorizes such variance.

### VII. SUMMARY

The items addressed in this policy are common sense items. As holders of confidential information, there comes a level of responsibility to take proper precautions to protect it. The use of the Internet and Town-owned resources is a privilege that can and will be revoked when necessary and appropriate. The primary purpose of this policy is to maintain a productive and professional work environment for conducting Town business. Violations of this policy will be addressed in accordance with the Town of North Wilkesboro’s Personnel Policy. It is understood that any substantive changes to the policy should only be implemented after first consulting with the Town Manager and Board of Commissioners

I have read and agree to all terms in this internet policy:
Employee Signature:
Date:

