

Civil Service Commission

Barrantys Shirveish y Reiltys

Secretary
Mrs B. Skillicorn

MEMORANDUM

To : Chief Officers, Departments, Boards and Offices
From : Brenda Skillicorn, Secretary, Civil Service Commission
cc : Secretary, Government Officers' Association
Ref : CT44
Date : 13 September 2002
Subject : **USE OF GOVERNMENT'S INTERNET AND OUTLOOK SYSTEM**

The Civil Service Commission endorses fully Government's policy and Codes of Practice relating to the Management of Information Security and usage of the Internet and Outlook system. However, recent events have highlighted that Government's policy in regard to e-mail could be open to interpretation in relation to what constitutes offensive messages or information. The Commission is also cognisant of its legal obligations to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to promote and assure a work environment which discourages harassment, bullying or discrimination of any kind.

The Commission has decided to issue its interpretation of the policy and guidelines for all civil servants in regard to use of Government's Internet and Outlook system and to clarify the consequences of failure to observe them.

The Commission acknowledges that it is for Chief Officers to determine the extent of personal use of both e-mail and the Internet as provided under Government's policy. However, it is the responsibility of every Chief Officer to make sure that clear guidelines are in place and they are communicated to all users of the system. Also, managers must understand it is their role to monitor use of the systems and periodically remind staff of the policy and guidelines. On the part of staff, every individual must observe the various policies and guidelines in place which of necessity are founded on trust. It must be made clear to staff that any breaches of that trust may lead to formal disciplinary proceedings and this may in serious cases lead to dismissal.

Attached to this memorandum is a copy of the Commission's statement of interpretation and standards to apply which must be brought to the attention of all civil servants under your authority. It should also be brought to the attention of any non-Civil Service staff who have line management responsibility for civil servants.

Any new staff appointed subsequent to this memorandum should be given a hard copy of the statement as part of the workplace induction. It is also recommended that a copy be included in any Departmental staff handbooks or guidance issued to managers.

Brenda Skellern

**POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE WHEN USING
GOVERNMENT'S INTERNET AND OUTLOOK SYSTEM**

1. All civil servants will observe Government's E-mail and Internet policy as set out in the Code of Best Practice for Internet, E-mail and Calendar and subsequent amendments thereto. This Code can be found on Public Folders and a hard copy of the policies must be given to every civil servant prior to authorised use of the system.
2. Any breach of the policies or directives set out in the Code of Practice will be considered a disciplinary offence and in serious cases may constitute gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal under Civil Service disciplinary procedures.
3. It will be for Chief Officers to determine the guidelines to apply in regard to authorised and personal use as provided for in the Code of Practice and to ensure that such guidelines are communicated to, and observed by, every civil servant in his/her Department, Board and Office.
4. It will be for every civil servant to observe workplace guidelines and standards and not to breach the trust placed in them. Any proven breaches of that trust may lead to disciplinary proceedings and where sufficiently serious may lead to dismissal.
5. For the avoidance of doubt any message which includes an inappropriate reference or image about sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or political beliefs; bad language; risqué jokes or defamatory, hurtful, discriminatory commentary will be construed as offensive for the purposes of paragraph 5 of the E-mail policy. It is not acceptable to interpret this paragraph on the grounds that the message was not considered to be offensive by the recipient.
6. In the event that a civil servant receives an offensive message from a sender either within Government or from an external source this must be notified to the line manager immediately so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any repetition.
7. The interpretation which is set out in paragraph 5 above also applies to information downloaded or uploaded via the Internet system referred to in paragraph 5 of the Internet policy.
8. This statement and guidelines are supplemental to a civil servant's obligation not to misuse Government's computer system which is central to the way in which Government does business. Misuse remains a serious disciplinary offence. While not exhaustive the following is a list of examples of misuse; the use of unauthorised software, deliberate introduction of viruses, breach of information security systems or unauthorised disclosure of information.

Issued on behalf of the
Civil Service Commission
September 2002