

Internal & External Communications Policy

APPROVED BY: Council

DATE: January 14, 2013

1.0 POLICY

Salem provides and maintains the following forms of electronic communication, messaging agents and electronic facilities: Internal and external electronic mail (e-mail), telephone voice mail, Internet access, and computer hardware and software. As a condition of providing the previously identified communications access to its staff and to its congregation, Salem places certain restrictions on workplace use of the same. Salem resources are to be used for Salem business.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

The internal communication systems, as well as the equipment and data stored, are and remain at all times the property of Salem. Accordingly, all messages and files created, sent, received or stored within the system should be related to Salem business and are and will remain the property of Salem. System, or Salem, wide distributions of e-mail (announcements, bulletins, etc.) requires Council approval in advance of the distribution.

Salem reserves the right to retrieve and review any message, or file composed, sent or received. It should be noted that although a message or file is deleted or erased, it is still possible to recreate the message. Therefore, ultimate privacy of messages cannot be assured to anyone. Although electronic mail and voice mail may allow the use of passwords for security, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. It is possible for messages to be retrieved and viewed by someone other than the intended recipient. Furthermore, all passwords are known to Salem as the system may need to be accessed by Salem in the absence of staff.

When utilizing e-mail, etiquette is important. The strategies for effective e-mail communication are as follows:

- communicating urgent matters for immediate response, to communicate with several people quickly or any other time sensitive matter;
- keeping all messages as brief as possible will minimize reading time for recipient, thereby keeping communication efficient;
- be as complete as possible by using the simple rules of who, what, when, where and why to answer any anticipated questions;
- avoid communicating through e-mail on a sensitive subject that should be addressed in person; if possible,
- communicate confidential information in another form other than e-mail;
- check for accuracy and apply all good business writing, using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation;
- follow up if a response has not been received in a timely manner;
- read all messages and respond regularly;
- avoid the use of typing a message in all capital letters; and
- be careful not to use the 'Reply All' function when not necessary or intended, i.e. system wide distribution
- ensure that messages are deleted or saved; the server should not be used to permanently store messages

While Salem encourages staff use of the Internet, its use is restricted to the following:

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- to communicate with staff, the congregation, vendors, or other agencies regarding matters within an staff's assigned duties;
- to acquire information related to, or designed to facilitate the performance of regular assigned duties; and
- to facilitate performance of any task or project in a manner approved by a staff's supervisor.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

The content of e-mail, voice mail messages for any file may not contain anything that would reasonably be considered offensive or disruptive to any staff or member of the church. Offensive content would include, but is not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender specific comments or any comments that would reasonably offend someone on the basis of their race, age, sex, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability.

Regarding Internet and e-mail access and usage, be advised that use of the Internet and e-mail provided by Salem expressly prohibits the following:

1. Dissemination or printing of copyrighted materials, including articles and software, in violation of copyright laws.
2. Sending, receiving, printing or otherwise disseminating confidential information of Salem or its business counterparts in violation of Salem policy or proprietary agreements.
3. Offensive or harassing statements or language including disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or political beliefs.
4. Sending or soliciting sexually oriented messages or images.
5. Sending chain letters.
6. Gambling or engaging in any other activity in violation of local, state or federal law.
7. Circulating jokes, comics or non-job related computer graphics.
8. Soliciting or proselytizing for commercial ventures, political or personal causes, outside organizations or any other non-job-related reasons without express authorization by Council.

4.0 PROCEDURES

Disciplinary action for violation of this policy may include, but is not limited to, revoking of access to Salem's electronic communications. In cases involving less serious violations, disciplinary action may consist of warning or reprimand, or other measures designed to prevent future misconduct. The measure of discipline will correspond to the gravity of the offense as weighed by its potential effect on Salem and its congregation.