

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

PERSONAL USE OF COURT OFFICE EQUIPMENT

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Personal Use of Court Office Equipment Policy is to provide guidance and information to employees of the Court on the appropriate use of court office equipment. Court office equipment is for the use of employees in the performance of official court business.

The Court recognizes that equipment supplied to carry out court business offers many conveniences that may be used by employees for personal needs at minimal or no additional costs to the taxpayer. This may enable such employees to be more efficient and productive in their professional as well as their personal lives. Thus, on balance, the limited personal use of such equipment, as further described herein, is in the best interest of the Court.

B. Definitions

1. Court - The term "Court" is defined as all employees of the United States District Court, Eastern District of Michigan which includes staff of the Clerk's Office, Probation Department, Pretrial Services Agency, Judicial Chambers, Court Reporters, and Staff Attorneys, unless specifically excluded in the eligibility section of the policy.
2. Privilege - the opportunity for employees to enjoy limited personal use of court office equipment in an effort to establish a work environment more conducive to efficiency and productivity. This policy does not create any right to use court office equipment for any purpose other than official court business. Nor does the privilege extend to modifying such equipment, or making configuration changes without the approval of an employee's supervisor and the Information Technology Department.
3. Court office equipment is any equipment provided or supported by the Court to assist or allow the employee to do their job, which includes, but is not limited to personal computers and related peripheral equipment and software, mobile devices (e.g., cellular phones, tablets, laptops, etc.), library resources, telephones, facsimile machines, photocopiers, office supplies, Internet connectivity, access to Internet services, and email. This list is provided to show examples of office equipment intended to be covered by this policy, and it is not meant to be comprehensive.
4. Minimal additional expense - is defined as personal use that will result in no more than normal wear and tear or the use of small amounts of electricity, ink, toner, or paper. Examples of such minimal additional

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expenses include making a limited number of photocopies, using a computer printer to print a limited number of pages, making occasional phone calls, infrequently sending e-mail messages, and limited use of the Internet.

5. Employee non-work time - is defined as time when employees are not otherwise expected to be addressing official business, such as before or after a workday or lunch periods.
6. Personal use - is defined as activity conducted by employees for purposes other than official court business.

C. Eligibility

The Personal Use of Court Office Equipment Policy applies to all Court employees. The Judicial Branch considers interns employees, albeit uncompensated ones, therefore any reference in this policy to “employees” shall be deemed to include interns.

D. Policy

1. Court employees are permitted limited use of court office equipment for personal needs if such use does not interfere with official business and involves minimal additional expense to the Court. The limited personal use of court office equipment should occur during employees' non-work time. This privilege to use court office equipment for non-court purposes may be revoked or limited at any time by the Court Administrator, Chief Probation Officer and Chief Pretrial Services Officer for employees in their court units. Judicial Officers may revoke or limit this privilege for members of their personal staff.
2. This policy does not affect employees' use of court office equipment for official business.
 - a. Court employees are specifically prohibited from using court equipment in furtherance of private business. However, employees may on non-work time, for example, use court office equipment to review Thrift Savings Plans or other personal investments; to monitor medical, dependent, or commuter savings accounts; or to communicate with volunteer charity organizations.

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- b. In using court office equipment for limited personal purposes, employees must, at all times, avoid giving the impression that they are acting in an official capacity. If there is a potential that such limited personal use could be interpreted to represent official business of the Court, an adequate disclaimer must be used, such as "The contents of this message are personal and do not reflect any position of the Court."
- c. Applications may be installed on court office equipment for personal use on personal time, understanding that the application(s) must not be charged to the Court and/or any government issued credit card and must not interfere with official court business or constitute an inappropriate use as defined below.
- d. *The Code of Conduct for Judicial Employees* applies to this privilege, including the stricture that court employees shall not lend the prestige of their offices to advance or appear to advance the private interests of others.

E. Inappropriate Personal Use

Inappropriate personal use of court office equipment includes:

- 1. Any personal use that could cause congestion, delay, or disruption of service to any government system. Examples include, but are not limited to, listening to Internet radio, watching streaming video (which includes movie previews), listening to streaming audio, downloading music files, playing on-line Internet games, downloading large programs or files (larger than 5 megabytes) and participating in on-line chat rooms.
- 2. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to other systems.
- 3. Creating, copying, transmitting, or re-transmitting chain letters or other unauthorized mass mailings, regardless of subject matter.
- 4. Using equipment for activities that are illegal, inappropriate, or offensive to fellow employees or the public, such as hate speech, or material that ridicules others on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, gender, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation.
- 5. Creating, downloading, viewing, storing, copying, transmitting, or re-transmitting sexually explicit or sexually oriented material.

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6. Creating, downloading, viewing, storing, copying, transmitting, or re-transmitting material related to illegal gambling, illegal weapons, and terrorist activities, or any other illegal or prohibited activities.
7. Using equipment for commercial activities or in support of commercial activities or in support of outside employment for the business activity, such as consulting for pay, administering business transactions, or selling goods or services.
8. Using equipment for fund-raising activity (other than for Court authorized activity related to the Combined Federal Campaign), endorsing any product or service, participating in any lobbying activity, or engaging in any prohibited partisan activity.
9. Posting court information to external news groups, bulletin boards, or other public sites without authority, including any use that could create the perception that the communication was made in an official capacity as a court employee, and public statements at variance with the Court's mission or position.
10. Using equipment in a manner that results in loss of productivity, interference with official duties, or greater than minimal additional expense to the Court.
11. Acquiring, using, reproducing, transmitting, or distributing without authorization any controlled information. Controlled information includes proprietary data subject to the intellectual property rights of others, such as copyright, trademark or other rights (beyond fair use), as well as computer software or data, e.g., export-controlled software or data.

F. Email Policy

Email within the Court is primarily to be used for official use. However, occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted provided that it does not interfere with the performance of duties. To ensure the proper use of the Court's email system the following shall apply:

1. All passwords are to be kept secure. (See Section G. Network Password Policy below for more information).

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2. Employees are required to regularly check their email each working day, unless on official leave.
3. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential or sensitive information. If in doubt, please consult your manager.
4. Personal/inspirational quotes or statements are not permitted.
5. The format of one's email should be professional, including the signature block. A signature block within an employee's email must be limited to the following pieces of information:
 - Name/Job Title, Department, Court Name/Mailing Address, Telephone and/or fax number, Email Address, Website Address and mobile disclaimer (if applicable, e.g., "This message sent from my mobile phone"). See Appendix A, #1.
 - A small image of the Court/Agency seal may be included (available from the IT Help Desk). See Appendix A, #2.

G. Network Password Policy

Passwords are an important aspect of computer security. They are the front line of protection for user accounts. A poorly chosen password may compromise the Court's entire network. As such, all Court Staff and Interns are responsible for taking the appropriate steps, as outlined below, to select and secure their passwords.

1. All network passwords must be changed every three months, be at least six characters in length, and must include characters from at least three of the following four categories:
 - English uppercase characters (A-Z)
 - English lowercase characters (a-z)
 - Base 10 digits (0-9)
 - Special characters (e.g., '~!@#\$%^&*()_+~={}|[]\:"';,)
2. Strong passwords have the following important characteristics:
 - Contain both upper and lower case characters (e.g., a-z, A-Z)
 - Have digits and punctuation characters as well as letters (e.g., 0-9, !@#\$%^&*()_+~='{}[]:"<>?/)

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- Are at least ten characters long
 - Are not based on personal information, names of family, etc.
3. Users cannot reuse the previous two passwords.
 4. Passwords must not be inserted into email messages or other forms of electronic communication.
 5. Passwords should never be written down or stored online.
 6. If an account or password is suspected to have been compromised, report the incident to the Information Technology Help Desk and change all passwords.

H. Management and Sanctions

The Court's supervisors and managers have the authority and responsibility for ensuring that employees' use of court office equipment is in accordance with this policy.

Unauthorized or improper use of court office equipment may result in loss of the privilege, limitation of the privilege, disciplinary or adverse actions (up to and including termination), criminal penalties, or financial responsibility for the costs of improper use.

Please contact the Human Resources Department with any questions (313) 234-5065.

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APPENDIX A

1. John Doe
Deputy Clerk
U.S. District Court – Eastern District of Michigan
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Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 234-500X – Office
(313) 234-500X – Cell
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employee@mied.uscourts.gov
www.mied.uscourts.gov
Sent from my mobile phone

2.

