

## **601 SAFETY**

To assist in providing a safe and healthful work environment for employees, customers, and visitors, Hall County has established a workplace safety program. This program is a top priority for Hall County. The Human Resources Department has responsibility for implementing, administering, monitoring, and evaluating the safety program. Its success depends on the alertness and personal commitment of all.

Hall County provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications.

Employees and supervisors receive periodic workplace safety training. The training covers potential safety and health hazards and safe work practices and procedures to eliminate or minimize hazards.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, such as performing work in an unsafe manner or failure to use required safety equipment; who cause hazardous or dangerous situations for employees, co-workers or the general public, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The use of seat belts is required by the driver and passengers in all County vehicles. Law enforcement officials may be exempt from this policy as it relates to passengers when it is impossible to secure a passenger.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, employees should immediately notify the Human Resources Department or the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

## **602 SMOKING**

As of July 1, 2005, the Georgia Smokefree Air Act became law. The act prohibits smoking in most public places.

In keeping with Hall County's intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited throughout the workplace including: common work areas, conference and meeting rooms, private offices, hallways, cafeterias, employee lounges, stairs, restrooms and all other enclosed facilities. Additionally, smoking is not permitted in any county vehicle. This policy applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors. All smoking is confined to designated areas.

### **603 OVERTIME**

When operating requirements or other needs cannot be met during regular working hours, employees may be scheduled to work overtime hours. When possible, advance notification of these mandatory assignments will be provided. All overtime work must receive the supervisor's prior authorization. Overtime assignments will be distributed as equitably as practical to all employees qualified to perform the required work. Hall County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in administering overtime.

Overtime compensation is paid to all nonexempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Time off on sick leave, vacation leave, or any leave of absence will not be considered hours worked for purposes of performing overtime calculations.

### **604 USE OF EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**

Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. Employees are responsible for items issued to them by Hall County or in their possession or control, such as the following: equipment, identification badges, keys, pagers, protective equipment, security passes, tools, uniforms, vehicles.

Please notify the supervisor if any equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. The supervisor can answer any questions about an employee's responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

The improper, careless, negligent, destructive, or unsafe use or operation of equipment or vehicles, as well as excessive or avoidable traffic and parking violations, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

No employee shall take any County-owned vehicle, County supplies or equipment or County paid manpower for personal use. Employees shall only use equipment in the manner authorized by the department director.

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The County reserves the right to search an employee's possessions kept in County offices, vehicles, desks, or lockers for appropriate reasons. Employees shall have no right of privacy with respect to County facilities, equipment e-mails and other communications. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, searches for:

- County documents
- Missing or stolen articles
- Alcohol or drugs
- Firearms or weapons.

A department director, the County Administrator, or an authorized elected official may approve such a search when reasonable suspicion or investigatory procedure warrants.

## **605 BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES**

Hall County will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the Department Director and comply with established policies.

Employees whose travel plans have been approved are responsible for making their own travel arrangements.

When approved, the costs of travel, meals, lodging, and other expenses directly related to accomplishing business travel objectives will be reimbursed by Hall County up to the limits stated in the official County Travel Policy. Employees are expected to limit expenses to reasonable amounts.

Employees who are involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by Hall County may not be used for personal use without prior approval.

When travel is completed, employees should submit completed travel expense reports within 5 days. Reports should be accompanied by receipts for all individual expenses in accordance with the established County policy.

Employees should contact their supervisor for guidance and assistance on procedures related to travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other business travel issues.

Abuse of this business travel expenses policy, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, can be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **606 COMPUTER AND EMAIL USAGE**

### **606.1 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY POLICY**

#### **606.1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Computer information systems and networks are an integral part of business at Hall County Government. The County has made a substantial investment in human and financial resources to create these systems.

The enclosed policies and directives, administered by the MIS Director, have been established in order to:

- Protect this investment
- Safeguard the information contained within these systems
- Reduce business and legal risk
- Protect the good name of the County.

#### **606.1.2 CONTENTS**

The topics covered in this document include:

- Statement of responsibility
- The Internet and E-mail
- Computer viruses
- Access codes and passwords
- Physical security
- Copyrights and license agreements

#### **606.1.3 STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY**

General responsibilities pertaining to this policy are set forth in this section. The following sections list additional specific responsibilities.

- Ensure that all appropriate personnel are aware of and comply with this policy.
- Create appropriate performance standards, control practices, and procedures designed to provide reasonable assurance that all employees observe this policy.

#### **606.1.4 MIS DIRECTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

Development and maintain written standards and procedures necessary to ensure implementation of and compliance with these policy directives.

Provide appropriate support and guidance to assist employees to fulfill their responsibilities under this directive.

#### 606.1.5 THE INTERNET AND E-MAIL

The Internet is a very large, publicly accessible network that has millions of connected users and organizations worldwide. One popular feature of the Internet is e-mail.

##### a. Policy

Access to the Internet is provided to employees for the benefit of Hall County and its various departments, agencies and the Northeastern Judicial Circuit. Employees are able to connect to a variety of business information resources around the world.

Conversely, the Internet also has risks and inappropriate material. To ensure that all employees are responsible and productive Internet users and to protect the County's interests, the following guidelines have been established for using the Internet and e-mail. Incidental and occasional personal use of e-mail is permitted, but such messages will be treated no differently from other messages.

##### b. Open Records Law

Assume that any e-mail message you draft may be made public if required under the open records law. Employees are informed that their department managers or County Commission or Court Administration may be required to disclose to parties within or outside the County the contents of the e-mail sent to and between individuals covered by this policy without the individual's permission. **Any open records request for production of documents should be sent to the Clerk of the commission, unless the request concerns documents of the courts in which case the request should be sent to Court Administration. No records shall be released by the County regarding pending investigations or prosecutions of criminal activity without proper notification and approval of the District Attorney (or Solicitor where the case is in State Court.)**

##### c. Acceptable Use

Employees using the Internet represent Hall County or the Northeastern Judicial Circuit. As such, they are responsible for ensuring that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Examples of acceptable use are:

- Using Web browsers to obtain business information from commercial Web sites.
- Accessing databases for information needed.
- Using email in the course of conducting County business.

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d. Unacceptable Use

Employees must not use the Internet for purposes that are illegal, unethical, harmful to Hall County, or nonproductive. Examples of unacceptable use are:

- Sending or forwarding chain e-mail, e.g. messages containing instructions to forward the message to others.
- Broadcasting e-mail, e.g. sending the same message to more than 10 recipients or more than one distribution list, unless authorized.
- Transmitting or accessing any content that is offensive, harassing, or fraudulent.

e. System Security

No computer system is completely secure. The e-mail system is not intended to transmit sensitive materials such as personnel discussions or confidential material that may be more appropriately communicated by written memorandum or conversations.

f. Downloads

Downloading files can be defined as the transfer of a file from the Internet to the hard drive of your computer. File downloads of executable (exe) programs or files from the Internet are not permitted unless specifically authorized by your Supervisor or MIS.

g. Employee Responsibilities

An employee who uses the Internet or Internet e-mail shall:

- Ensure that communications are for professional reasons and that they do not interfere with his/her productivity.
- Be responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images that is placed or sent over the Internet. All communications should have the employee's name attached.
- Not transmit copyrighted materials without permission.
- Know and abide by all applicable Hall County policies dealing with security and confidentiality of Hall County records.
- Run a virus scan on any executable file(s) received through the Internet.

h. Copyrights

Employees using the Internet are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add, or delete information or programs belonging to others unless given express permission to do so by the owner. Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action by Hall County and/or legal action by the copyright owner.

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i. Computer Viruses

Computer viruses are programs designed to make unauthorized changes to programs and data. Therefore, viruses can cause destruction of County resources.

1. Background

It is important to know that:

- Computer viruses are much easier to prevent than to cure.
- Defenses against computer viruses include protection against unauthorized access to computer systems, using only trusted sources for data and programs, and maintaining virus-scanning software.

2. MIS Responsibilities

MIS shall:

- Install and maintain appropriate antivirus software on all computers.
- Respond to all virus attacks, destroy any virus detected, and document each incident.

3. Employee responsibilities

Employees will:

- Not knowingly introduce a computer virus into County computers.
- Not load diskettes of unknown origin
- Incoming diskettes will be scanned for viruses before they are read.
- Any Employee who suspects that his/her workstation has been infected by a virus will IMMEDIATELY POWER OFF the workstation and call the MIS Help Desk at ext. 6704

j. Access codes and password

The confidentiality and integrity of data stored on Hall County computer systems must be protected by access controls to ensure that only authorized employees have access. This access shall be restricted to only those capabilities that are appropriate to each employee's job duties.

k. MIS Help Desk Responsibilities

The MIS Help Desk shall be responsible for the administration of access controls to all Hall county computer systems. The MIS Help Desk will process additions, deletions, and changes upon receipt of a written request from the end user's supervisor or Court IT.

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Deletions may be processed by an oral request prior to reception of the written request. The MIS Help Desk will maintain a list of administrative access codes and passwords and keep this list in a secure area.

l. Employee responsibilities

Each Employee:

- Will be responsible for all computer transactions that are made with his/her User ID and password.
- Will not disclose passwords to others. Passwords must be changed immediately if it is suspected that an unauthorized user has learned your password. Passwords should not be recorded where they may be easily obtained.
- Will change passwords at least every 120 days.
- Should use passwords that will not be easily guessed by others.
- Should log out when leaving a workstation for an extended period.

m. Supervisor's responsibility

If an employee with Internet access involuntarily terminates employment, as a security measure, the supervisor should contact MIS immediately to report the termination.

n. Physical security

It is Hall County policy to protect computer hardware, software, data, and documentation from misuse, theft, unauthorized access, and environmental hazards.

Employee responsibilities

- Diskettes should be stored out of sight when not in use. If they contain highly sensitive or confidential data, they must be locked up.
- Diskettes should be kept away from environmental hazards such as heat, direct sunlight, and magnetic fields.
- Critical computer equipment, e.g., file servers, must be protected by an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). A surge suppressor should protect other computer equipment.
- Environmental hazards to hardware such as food, smoke, liquids, high or low humidity, and extreme heat or cold should be avoided.
- Since MIS or Court IT is responsible for all equipment installations, disconnections, modifications, and relocations, employees are not to perform these activities. This does not apply to temporary moves of portable computers for which an initial connection has been set up by MIS or Court IT.

- Employees shall not take shared portable equipment such as laptop computers out of the office without the informed consent of their department manager. Informed consent means that the manager knows what equipment is leaving, what data is on it, and for what purpose it will be used.
- Employees should exercise care to safeguard the valuable electronic equipment assigned to them. Employees who neglect this duty may be accountable for any loss or damage that may result.

o. Copyrights and license agreements

It is Hall County policy to comply with all laws regarding intellectual property. Hall County and its employees are legally bound to comply with the Federal Copyright Act (Title 17 of the U.S. Code) and all proprietary software license agreements. Noncompliance can expose Hall County and the responsible employee(s) to civil and/or criminal penalties. This applies to all software that is owned by Hall County, licensed to Hall County, or developed using Hall County resources by employees or vendors. Employees will not install, copy, or install software without the approval of the MIS Department. Only software that is licensed to or owned by Hall County is to be installed on Hall County computers. All Hall County computers will be scanned at least annually to verify that only authorized software is installed.

p. Violations

Failure to observe these guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including possible termination by Hall County depending upon the type and severity of the violation, whether it causes any liability or loss to the County, and/or the presence of any repeated violations(s).

## **607 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Hall County is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. Given the increasing violence in society in general, Hall County has adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.

All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. The County specifically prohibits the possession of weapons by any employee while on County property unless your job requires that you carry a weapon in the normal course of business. This ban includes keeping or transporting a weapon in a vehicle in a parking area, whether public or private. Non-sworn employees are also prohibited from carrying a weapon while performing services within the county.

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Weapons include guns, knives, explosives, and other items with the potential to inflict harm. Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's sex, race, age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

All threats of or actual violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by customers, vendors, inmates, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor. Do not place yourself in peril. If you see or hear a commotion or disturbance near your workstation, do not try to intercede or see what is happening.

Hall County will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of or actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, Hall County may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone responsible for violence, or threats of violence, or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Hall County encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the Human Resources Department before the situation escalates into potential violence. Hall County is eager to assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

## **608 HAZARDOUS WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

If hazardous weather conditions make it unduly hazardous for an employee to report to his/her place of work or the employee arrives late or leaves early, the department director and/or supervisor will discuss with the employee which of the following actions will be selected:

- Making up the time lost from work at a time scheduled by the department head
- Using accrued vacation leave
- Taking leave without pay

When unable to report to work due to weather conditions, employees shall notify their supervisor as soon as possible

Certain positions require mandatory coverage because they provide a critical County service such as Fire, Sheriff's and Public Works and other designated departments and individuals. The department manager may wish to provide transportation to assure proper staffing of services.

On occasion, administrative leave may be granted to all employees because of hazardous weather or related circumstances.