

VERMONT LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



POLICY MANUAL

VERMONT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Issued November 20, 2012
In effect as of November 20, 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Vermont State House computer systems are maintained and operated to further the mission and functions of the Vermont General Assembly.
- The Legislative Information Technology department operates under the direction and oversight of the Legislative Information Technology Committee, the Legislative Council Committee, the Director of the Legislative Council, and the Deputy Director for Information Technology.
- Members and staff may not use the legislative computer systems or the State House Internet connections for unlawful or inappropriate purposes.
- The Vermont State House computer system may not be used for campaign or personal business activities. Members may make reasonable use of the system to maintain contact with their regular workplaces during the legislative session.
- Members and staff may not release passwords or other information that would allow any outside person or entity, including family members, to access the legislative computer systems or compromise information security.
- All work-related data must be stored on network drives, not on the local workstation.
- No personal data may be stored on either the network or on the local workstation. This includes data from users' nonlegislative workplaces. **We cannot guarantee either the confidentiality or integrity of personal data stored on the State House computer system in violation of this policy.**
- E-mail is retained on the system for 90 days after receipt. It is then automatically purged unless archived by the user. Purged or deleted e-mail messages cannot be recovered. See the IT user support staff for more information about archiving.
NOTE: This e-mail retention policy is temporarily on hold due to pending litigation. Messages are not currently purged.
- Incoming e-mail is scanned by an outside service for unsolicited commercial e-mail, commonly called "spam". E-mail messages thought to be spam are quarantined for 30 days. Users can and should review the quarantine (<http://vtleg.messagescreen.com>) at least weekly to find legitimate messages which may have been mistaken for spam.
- A limited amount of support will be provided for personally owned laptops or mobile devices used in support of legislative business. This support generally will consist of (1) connecting the device to the State House wireless network; (2) configuration of the device to receive and send State House e-mail; and (3) configuration of the device to print to State House printers. **Configuration of personally owned equipment is at the owner's risk.**

VERMONT LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICIES

1. General

- 1.1. The Vermont State House computer systems are maintained and operated to further the mission and functions of the Vermont General Assembly.
- 1.2. The Legislative Information Technology department operates under the direction and oversight of the Legislative Information Technology Committee, the Legislative Council Committee, the Director of the Legislative Council, and the Deputy Director for Information Technology.
- 1.3. Decisions regarding technologies, including selection of hardware and software, location of equipment, life-cycle replacements, operations, policies, etc., are made in the best interests of the Legislature as a whole.

2. Appropriate Use

- 2.1. The Vermont State House computer system is intended to support the business of the Vermont Legislature and members' individual legislative activities.
- 2.2. Users of the computer system may not use the system for unlawful or inappropriate purposes.
- 2.3. Members and staff may not use the computer system for campaign or personal business activities. Members may make reasonable use of the system to maintain contact with their regular workplaces during the legislative session.
- 2.4. A reasonable amount of personal use of the system is permitted as long as such use conforms with these policies and does not interfere with work activities or other employees' access to the system.
- 2.5. There may be circumstances where members and staff, in the course of legislative business, might need to access web sites that would not normally be considered appropriate in a workplace context. Those occasions are rare, and should be governed by the member's and staff's best judgment.

3. Security

3.1. Authorized Users

- 3.1.1. The State House computer system may only be used by members of the Vermont Legislature, legislative staff, contractors under the supervision of legislative employees, paid or unpaid interns hired or appointed by the Legislature or a Legislative department, and authorized third parties.
- 3.1.2. The State House computer system may not be used by any other person, including family or friends of members and staff of the Vermont Legislature, paid or unpaid interns hired by individual members, and members of the public.

3.2. Logins

- 3.2.1. A login account to the Vermont State House computer system will be created whenever a new member of the legislature is elected or appointed, or when a new member of the staff is hired.
- 3.2.2. Users will be granted the level of access to applications, services, documents, and data that is appropriate for the user's department and position.
- 3.2.3. In order to have the login account created before the employee begins work, departments must notify the Legislative IT department at least two working days before the start date.

3.3. Passwords

- 3.3.1. Users of the computer system must treat user IDs and passwords as confidential information and not release them to any unauthorized person. This includes login passwords, e-mail passwords, and remote access passwords.
- 3.3.2. The Legislative IT staff does not have the ability to find out the current password for a user who has forgotten it, but can create a new password for the user upon request.
- 3.3.3. Login passwords will expire after not more than one year, and cannot be reused. *Industry best practices provide that login passwords should expire after two to six months.*

3.4. Remote access

- 3.4.1. Remote access to the State House computer systems is provided to those users who have a business need for remote access.
- 3.4.2. All appropriate use policies for the general State House computer system apply equally to the remote access system.

3.5. Termination of employment

- 3.5.1. It is the responsibility of each legislative department to notify the IT staff when an employee is terminated or otherwise leaves the Legislature.
- 3.5.2. All state-owned computer equipment provided to a legislative member or employee, including laptop computers, tablets, smart phones, and similar devices, must be returned to the IT department upon separation from the Legislature or termination of employment.
- 3.5.3. Login accounts will be deactivated when a member of the Legislature or a staff person is terminated or otherwise leaves the employment of the Legislature. Upon request, the Legislative IT staff will set up an auto-reply or a forwarding rule on a former employee's mailbox for a period of two weeks.

4. Data

- 4.1. Users are encouraged to save their work frequently during the course of the workday. The Legislative IT department will be unable to recover data lost from an unsaved document.
- 4.2. All work-related data must be stored on network drives, not on the local workstation. Data stored on laptops and mobile devices must be periodically copied to the network for safekeeping.
- 4.3. No personal data files (including data files from users' nonlegislative workplaces) may be stored on the State House computer system or on individual workstations. The Legislative IT department cannot guarantee either the integrity or the confidentiality of personal data. Note: This section applies to State House workstations only; laptops and mobile devices operate under different policies.
- 4.4. For legislative staff, all work-related documents should be stored within the DM document management system. Members of the Legislature should store work-related documents in their My Documents folder.
- 4.5. The Joint Fiscal Office maintains a non-DM directory structure which predates the Legislative computer system. Documents and spreadsheets relating to this structure may be stored outside DM.

5. E-mail

- 5.1. E-mail messages, appointments, and tasks are retained for 90 days following receipt, and then purged from the system. *This policy is temporarily suspended due to ongoing litigation.*
- 5.2. The entire GroupWise environment is backed up daily for disaster recovery purposes. However, restoration of individual e-mail messages is virtually impossible due to the structure of the GroupWise database.
- 5.3. The Legislative e-mail system uses an automated system to scan incoming messages for characteristics typical of bulk commercial e-mail, often called "spam". Messages which resemble spam are quarantined for 30 days, and then discarded. Users can (and should) review the spam quarantine periodically to check for legitimate messages incorrectly treated as spam.

6. Software & Hardware

- 6.1. State House computer system workstations are provided with a standard software suite. The standard software suite is considered complete for members of the Legislature and staff to perform their job duties, and is fully supported by the Legislative IT department.
- 6.2. The IT department will purchase and install software other than the supported suite ("third-party software") upon a user's workstation upon the request of his or her department head if required for performance of the user's job duties. Third-party software will have only limited support from the IT department.

- 6.3. Personally owned software is not permitted on any State House computer system workstation or server. Unauthorized software installed on State House workstations may be removed without warning.
- 6.4. Users may not modify workstation hardware. Workstations may be modified, relocated, or replaced by the IT staff as needed to support the operations of the computer system as a whole.
- 6.5. When computer hardware is removed from service, it will be transferred to the Division of Surplus Property of the Department of General Services for reuse or disposal.

7. Support

- 7.1. Support is generally available only during regular business hours from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; but may be scheduled in advance if needed for events at other times. Support is available in emergencies which occur outside regular business hours.
- 7.2. The Legislative IT staff will make their best efforts to service hardware and software in a timely manner. However, limited support resources require that support requests be prioritized, with the most critical problems attended to first.
- 7.3. Under certain circumstances, certain advanced features of supported software may conflict with other applications in the software suite. When the features in question are critical to legislative operations, the staff will work to resolve the conflicts or develop a workaround.
- 7.4. Commercial software applications are purchased “off-the-shelf”, and configured to incorporate the software’s features into the legislative process. In most cases, the IT staff cannot modify the software’s behavior beyond that point.
- 7.5. The Legislative IT staff will provide users with assistance in using the supported software suite to perform legislative work. This assistance may include classroom or other formal training as described above, one-on-one coaching, troubleshooting, problem resolution, and technical assistance.

8. Support of Personally Owned Equipment

- 8.1. A limited amount of support will be provided for personally owned laptop computers and mobile devices used in support of legislative business.
- 8.2. The Legislative IT staff will attempt to configure laptop computers and other wireless devices to access the State House wireless system. **Configuration of personally owned equipment is at the owner’s risk.**
- 8.3. The Legislative IT staff cannot support Windows versions older than Windows XP, Macintosh OS X versions older than 10.3, or some specific IOS and Android devices (due to differing vendor implementations).
- 8.4. Assistance will be provided to users in accessing outside e-mail and other online services. Such assistance will be limited to providing a trouble-free connection to the online site. Assistance with using the features of the site will not be provided.