

SUBJECT: Computer Use and Ethics

Midland College employees are expected and asked to use institutional computer equipment in the best manner possible to fulfill the stated mission of the College. Further, to help set an ethical example for students and the community, institutional employees must avoid the following prohibited activities while using institutional computer equipment:

- Accessing institutional computer equipment without specific authorization.
- Accessing third-party computers without authorization by using institutional computer equipment.
- Stealing and/or sabotaging institutional computer equipment, including programs and files.
- Using hacker programs and/or techniques to try to access either institutional computer systems or external computer systems using institutional computer equipment.
- Running unauthorized software or hardware on institutional computer equipment.
- Running a personal business using institutional computer equipment.
- Using institutional computer equipment to install, transmit, or store unauthorized software, inappropriate images and/or jokes, spam, or personal correspondence.
- Sending e-mail or instant messages to the entire Midland College community for non-emergency or institutional purposes without proper authorization.
- Using institutional computer equipment in any manner that violates federal, state and/or local laws or other Midland College policies.

In addition, employees need to note these following points:

- Employees have no privacy rights concerning information stored on, and transmitted via institutional computer equipment. Employees should not expect personal or private information stored on institutional-connected computer equipment to remain private.
- Without prior notice, Midland College can access, disclose, use, or remove both business and personal communications and information from institutional computer equipment.

- Midland College may conduct random audits to verify that institutional computer equipment is clear of viruses, Trojan horse programs, or other malicious software as well as check that institutional computer equipment is used in accordance with Midland College policies.
- Midland College will investigate complaints about any institutional computer equipment use that is thought to violate computer use and ethics policies as well as monitor Internet activity.
- Midland College will report any institutional computer use believed to violate standing federal, state, and/or local laws to the appropriate authorities.

Any employee determined to be in violation of any of the above computer use and ethics guidelines will be disciplined according to established Midland College Discipline Policies (see appropriate procedure).

Procedure for using GroupWise mass-mailing group

Before using the “All-Points Bulletin” feature in the GroupWise e-mail program, to e-mail a message that does not directly relate to Midland College business or announce an immediate emergency, institutional employees must follow these steps:

- Inform immediate supervisor about the message, and confirm that it does not violate any current computer-use policies.
- Ensure the actual message is clear and concise; leave lengthy details for any required follow-up e-mails.
- End the message with the following: “If you would like more detailed information about \_\_\_\_\_, please reply to this e-mail and I will add you to a group mailing list for it.”
- Create and use a specific mailing list of only those people who requested additional information from the original.
- Never use the “All-Points Bulletin” feature more than once for the given subject; any additional messages should be sent only to those employees who ask to receive additional information.

In addition, institutional employees need to be aware that Midland College offers the “MC – Discussion Board” <http://www2.midland.edu/discussion/> for public messages, jokes, items to sell, and so on. Institutional employees must determine that this discussion board does not meet their needs prior to sending mass e-mails through GroupWise.

Procedure for computer use and safety

Midland College employees must operate institutional computer equipment to both conserve energy and protect College data. To do so, employees must follow these guidelines:

- Whenever leaving a computer for any period of time, employees must either turn it off, or lock the desktop to prevent unauthorized access.
- Employees must shut down computers overnight.
- On Wednesdays, employees may leave computers turned on, but locked, for the I.T. Department's designated operating system and security updates.
- Employees must learn the security software used on their computers, and ensure that it is up-to-date.
- Employees must follow established constraints for initiating and changing passwords according to the predetermined schedule.

If an employee does have a need to leave a computer on overnight, other than the designated update night, he or she must gain permission to do so through the designated chain of command in his or her department. Further, the employee must ensure that all proper security measures are followed to secure the physical computer from unauthorized access overnight.

Any institutional employee determined to be in violation of any of the above computer use and safety guidelines of this procedure will be disciplined according to the established Midland College Discipline Policies (see appropriate procedure).

Procedure for disciplinary action for violations of computer use and ethics policy

If an employee is determined to be in violation of any provision in the policy, he or she will be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- First offense: the employee will receive a verbal admonition and warning.
- Second offense: the employee will receive a formal written warning in his or her personnel file.
- Third offense: the employee's access to computer features (for instance, Internet access, GroupWise, etc.) will be restricted for a defined period of time and the employee's computer activity may be monitored by his or her immediate supervisor.
- Fourth or more offense: the employee will face possible loss of computer privileges as well as a formal written reprimand in his or her personnel file.
- For any violation of federal, state, and/or local laws, an employee can face termination from the College, plus Midland College will fully cooperate with authorities in any prosecution.

These actions are to be considered recommended guidelines. Midland College will take into consideration the unique characteristics of each situation when an employee is accused of not following the Computer Use and Ethics policy and apply discipline that is equal to that immediate situation.

Further, any disciplinary actions taken by Midland College must follow the established guidelines in the following policies from the Policies and Procedures Manual:

- Policy No. 02:01:05 – “Due Process for Disciplinary Action for Faculty Members Under Contract”
- Policy 05:09:03 – “Employee Conduct and Work Rules”
- Policy No. 05:09:04 – “Due Process for Disciplinary Action for Contract Employees”