Town of Essex Computer Use and Artificial Intelligence Policy	
Revision Number: **0.0**	**Town of Essex Selectboard** **Adopted on:** **12/15/25**
Revision Date:	
Effective Date: **12/15/25**	

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the efficient and appropriate use of the Town of Essex's ("Town's") owned or leased "technology resources" by employees, contractors, and other authorized users. "Technology resources" means any hardware, including Town issued computers, tablets, smartphones, mobile digital terminals (MDTs/laptops), host systems, printers, scanners, flash/thumb drives, software, remote access email, text messages, internet connection tools, artificial intelligence (AI), and networks.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and other authorized users of the Town's technology resources. A user of Town technology resources shall be responsible for following the requirements contained in this policy. The burden of compliance is on the user, and users are encouraged to inquire as to the acceptable and unacceptable uses prior to using Town technology resources if clarity is needed.

Section 1: Acceptable Use

- Town technology resources are for official use.

- Personal use of Town technology resources is permitted on a limited basis, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or violate any Town policies.

Section 2: Prohibited Activities

- Unauthorized access to any Town technology resources.

- Use of Town technology resources for illegal activities, including but not limited to, copyright infringement, hacking, and distribution of malicious software.

- Use of Town technology resources for personal financial gain or commercial purposes.

- Installation or use of unapproved software and executable programs.

- Use of Town technology resources for viewing, sending, copying, or soliciting sexually oriented messages or images, or accessing internet sites that are

"adult oriented" in nature, or which offer gambling services, or which contain obscene content of any nature.

Section 3: Security

- Users must take reasonable precautions to protect Town technology resources and data from unauthorized access, theft, and damage.

- Users must not share their passwords or other access credentials with others, whether inside or outside the organization.

- If you find information that seems confidential or restricted but is accessible to you without proper authorization, do not use or share it. Report the issue to IT right away so they can secure the data.

- Users must report any security incidents or suspected breaches to the IT Director immediately.

Section 4: Email and Internet Use

- Email and internet use should be primarily for official Town business.

- Most emails are considered public records and may be subject to disclosure upon request. As such, anyone sending or receiving emails in a professional capacity should exercise care and professionalism in their communications. Should a public records request be submitted, we are required to produce responsive emails unless a specific exemption applies, regardless of whether the content is unflattering or unprofessional.

- Users must not use Town email or internet resources to access, download, or distribute inappropriate or offensive content, which includes but is not limited to: content containing hate speech, sexually explicit content, deliberate misinformation, unlawful or harmful content, gambling or other similar content.

- Users must not use Town email, access to internal mailing lists, or internet resources for political activities or solicitations.

Section 5: Monitoring and Privacy

- All data that is composed, transmitted, or received via Town technology resources in the transaction of Town business is considered part of the official records of the Town and is subject to records retention laws and the Access to Public Records Act (State of Vermont: Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. § 117). There is no expectation of personal privacy in the use of Town technology resources. The Town reserves the right to monitor and inspect all use of its technology resources.

Section 6: Artificial Intelligence Use

- The use of artificial intelligence (AI) of any third-party or publicly available GenAI tools, including but not limited to ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft CoPilot, DALL-E, Midjourney, and other similar applications that mimic human intelligence to generate answers, work products, or perform certain tasks is permissible under the following guidelines:

  Guidelines <u>Do</u>:
  - Understand that GenAI tools may be useful but are not a substitute for human judgment and creativity.
  - Understand that many GenAI tools are prone to "hallucinations," false answers or information, or information that is stale, and therefore responses must always be carefully verified by a human.
  - Treat every bit of information you provide to a GenAI tool as if it will go viral on the Internet, attributed to you or the Town of Essex, regardless of the settings you have selected within the tool, or the assurances made by its creators.
  - Do review GenAI output to ensure it is an accurate, quality product.

  Guidelines <u>Do Not</u>:
  - Do not use GenAI tools to make or help you make employment decisions about applicants or employees, including recruitment, hiring, retention, promotions, transfers, performance monitoring, discipline, demotion, or terminations.
  - Do not upload or input any confidential, proprietary, or sensitive internal information into any GenAI tool. Examples include but are not limited to passwords and other credentials, protected health information, personnel material, information from documents marked Confidential, Sensitive, or Proprietary, personally identifying information, or any other nonpublic, internal or personal information that might be harmful to the Town of Essex, its employees, residents, or customers if disclosed.
  - Do not upload or input any personal information (names, addresses, likenesses, etc.) about any person into any GenAI tool.
  - Do not represent work created by a GenAI tool as being your own original work.
  - Do not integrate any GenAI tool with internal software without first receiving specific permission from your supervisor and the IT Department.

Section 7: Compliance

- o Users must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and Town policies when using Town technology resources.

- o Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Acknowledgment: All users must read and sign the Town of Essex Computer Use Policy acknowledgment form before being granted access to Town technology resources.

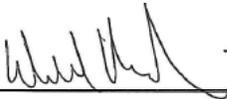Adopted by the Selectboard on December 15, 2025.

Town of Essex Selectboard

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Tracey Delphia, Chair

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Kendall Chamberlin, Vice Chair

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Shannon Jackson, Clerk

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Ethan Lawrence

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Andrew J. Watts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
of Computer Use and Artificial Intelligence Policy

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of the Town of Essex Computer Use and Artificial Intelligence Policy, adopted December 15, 2025.

I further understand that the Computer Use and Artificial Intelligence Policy of the Town of Essex is not a contract between the employer and employee. This policy is subject to change at any time by majority vote of the Selectboard.

_____   _____
Employee Signature   Date

_____
Print Name