



# ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

<b>SECTION:</b> 600 – Information Technology	<b>POLICY#:</b> 601
<b>TITLE:</b> Texting	<b>R &amp; O #:</b> 16-136
	<b>IMPLEMENTED BY PROCEDURE #:</b> 601-A
<b>SPONSORING DEPT/DIV:</b> Support Services/Information Technology	
<b>ADOPTED:</b> 10/18/2016	<b>REVIEWED:</b>

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to provide a means for the use of text messages for business purposes, while maintaining compliance with public record and confidentiality laws. While texting is a convenient and common form of communication, it must be done with sensitivity and compliance with other public sector statutes and best practices. All other instant messaging for business purposes conducted outside of County controlled infrastructure is prohibited.

**APPLICABILITY:** This policy applies to all County employees and volunteers.

**GENERAL POLICY:** The County recognizes that there are circumstances where texting is an efficient and effective business tool. As such, employees and volunteers may use text messaging in a manner that assures compliance with Public Record retention rules.

The texting of factual and logistic information that is not subject to public records retention requirements and/or confidentiality is allowed without restriction. The texting of any information that is subject to public records retention requirements, or other information related to County business that is (a) confidential, sensitive and or protected, and/or (b) that is not otherwise documented, or cannot be documented, in a separate public record must be sent by a standardized and secure text messaging client specifically provided by the County for such communication.

The secure text messaging client will be implemented on all phones where texting will be used for County business subject to public records retention requirements regardless of whether the devices are County-owned or personal property of the employee.

## **POLICY GUIDELINES:**

1. Responsibilities:  
The Information Technology Division shall be responsible for developing procedures to implement this policy.
2. Exceptions:

Exceptions may only be granted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners unless such authority has been delegated to the County Administrator.

3. Implementation:

Elected officials and department directors are expected to be knowledgeable of, and shall be responsible for, implementing this policy within their respective departments. Observance of this policy is mandatory for all County employees and violation may result in disciplinary action (up to and including termination).

4. Periodic Review:

This policy shall be reviewed by Support Services, Information Technology Division at least every three years, or more often if needed, and updated as necessary.