



**Policy No: 5.21**

**Subject:** Electronic Business Communications  
**Supersedes:** All existing corporate and business unit policies on this subject  
**Effective:** October 1, 1999  
**Reviewed:** March 1, 2002 & May 1, 2009, August 1, 2011, December 1, 2013  
**Revised:** December 1, 2010, May 1, 2011, August 1, 2011  
**Pages:** 4  
**Approved by:** Human Resources Executive Team (HRET)

## **1.0 Philosophy/Purposes**

Widespread use of electronic information processing, for both business and personal reasons, continues to accelerate at an astounding rate. Along with the advantages of paperless systems come risks and obligations. This policy is designed to outline Henry Ford Health System guidelines for operation of and access to electronic communications and information technology (both wireless and wired), specifically electronic mail (“e-mail”) voice mail, telephone utilization, the Internet, the Intranet, text messaging and any future electronic technology.

## **2.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, medical staff, students, volunteers and contractors at all business units and corporate offices of Henry Ford Health System.

The policy and procedures enumerated below shall apply unless such policy or procedures are otherwise specified in a contract to which Henry Ford Health System, or a covered business unit, is a signatory. In such cases, the terms of the contract shall govern for employees covered by that contract, and such terms will take precedence over this policy.

## **3.0 Responsibility**

The interpretation, administration and monitoring for compliance of this policy shall be the responsibility of HFHS Information Technology and operational leadership.

## **4.0 Policy**

All communications or business capabilities involving an electronic medium, including but not limited to electronic mail (“e-mail”), voice mail, telephone, text messaging, the Internet/Intranet and all future forms of electronic media, are provided to HFHS employees at the company’s expense solely to facilitate business activities. By using the HFHS electronic systems, employees are consenting to the provisions of this policy.

Because electronic systems are provided solely for business purposes, HFHS maintains the right to monitor and retrieve all records of utilization of electronic mediums such as but not limited to telephones and computers. Activity conducted over electronic mediums such as but not limited to e-mail, voice mail message, and records of internet utilization and text messages is the property of HFHS. Internet and Intranet usage is also monitored. Employees have no privacy interest in their e-mail, voice mail, and Internet or Intranet activity. HFHS also maintains the right to override passwords and security codes for legitimate business reasons. Employees may also be required to disclose personal passwords and security codes for safekeeping in Information Technology for employer access.

HFHS prohibits any type of electronic recording (i.e. audio, video etc.) by an employee, volunteer, student, agency personnel, and contractors without prior expressed consent of all parties involved. Employees, volunteers, students, agency, or contractors who engage in any electronic surveillance, eavesdropping, unauthorized or secret recording of any communications or meetings while on HFHS premises will be subject to corrective action.

## **5.0 Practice/Procedure**

- 5.1 By using the HFHS electronic systems, employees, medical staff, students, volunteers and contractors at all business units and corporate offices of Henry Ford Health System are consenting to the provisions in this policy, including HFHS' right to monitor and access e-mail, voice mail, Internet and Intranet activity and voice mail, telephone usage, and to disclose the information accordingly.
- 5.2 It is the intention of HFHS to access electronic mail data and other utilization of electronic mediums for legitimate business reasons, and it is recommended that employees do not keep highly personal or confidential data stored on HFHS electronic mediums
- 5.3 HFHS prohibits the use of electronic business tools to access, harass or discriminate against employees, patients, clients, members, outside providers or others, as stated in related policies. The use of offensive, harassing, vulgar, obscene or threatening language, web sites or images, including disparagement of others based on race, national origin, marital status, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, religious or political beliefs, height or weight is expressly prohibited.
- 5.4 Employees are prohibited from viewing, accessing, creating, distributing, downloading/uploading or soliciting sexually-oriented messages or images, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature. These same guidelines also cover anything of an illegal, violent or otherwise hostile nature. *See Harassment Policy 5.12 and EEO/AA Policy 3.04.*

5.5 HFHS prohibits the use of electronic means of communication (for example e-mail and voice mail, etc.) for excessive personal messages, solicitation of employees or distribution of information not related to HFHS business. The electronic exchange of trade secrets, proprietary information or any other confidential information is also prohibited. *See Confidentiality and Information Security Policy 5.18.*

5.6 Dissemination or printing of copyrighted material, including articles, music, videos and software, if in violation of copyright laws, is prohibited. *See Confidentiality and Information Security Policy 5.18*

5.7 HFHS prohibits conducting HFHS business while driving,, including but not limited to: texting, talking on the cell phone, or reading/responding to email.

Violations of this and related policies may lead to corrective action, up to and including termination and criminal prosecution. *See Corrective Action Program Policy 5.17.*

For guidelines and policies related to personal interactive websites/social media websites (such as Facebook, Twitter, internet blogging, etc.) please see *Social Media Usage Policy No: 5.29.*

## **6.0 E-mail Signature**

One of the many effective electronic communication tools within Henry Ford Health System is the use of e-mail. An email signature is an excellent medium to create a unified brand message and further extend all the Henry Ford Health System identity. Every e-mail you send can have an email "signature." This is text that is attached to the bottom of your email message. It provides useful information to your correspondents about your title and department. The "signatures" can even provide some marketing information about HFHS as well as professional information about you.

6.1 Please create your HFHS email signature with the following in mind:

- Name of the person sending the email
- Job specific professional credentials (i.e. MD, RN, PT, etc.)
- Department, Division, Business Unit name
- Phone numbers such as office, fax and blackberry
- Other business or professional related information specific to the position of employment or business of the department/business unit and approved in advance by someone in department leadership. (Examples include areas such as but not limited to department awards, achievement or other materials promoting the nature of service performed in the department.)

6.2 The use of email signatures containing non-work related personal information such as but not limited to greetings, phrases, pictures, motivational sayings or quotes is not permitted.

**The recommended format for email signature lines is:**

NAME

TITLE (Where appropriate)

DEPARTMENT

LOCATION

OFFICE PHONE

MOBILE PHONE (Where appropriate)

FAX (Where Appropriate)

EMAIL ADDRESS

BUSINESS WEBSITE (For most users: henryford.com or henryfordwestbloomfieldhospital.com or henryford.com/ortho)

Business specific variations to the recommended format and information included in the email signature are required to be reviewed and approved in advance by department leadership.

**Attachments to HR Policy 5.21**

**None**

***See also:***      *Confidentiality and Information Security Policy 5.18*  
                     *Corrective Action Program Policy 5.17*  
                     *Equal Employment Opportunity Policy 3.04*  
                     *Harassment Policy 5.12*  
                     *Patient Safety Policy 5.24*  
                     *Social Media Usage Policy No: 5.29*