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An Initiative of Association for Voluntary Action (AVA)

# Information Technology & Communication Policy



## Information Technology & Communication Policy

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## 1. Introduction

The objective of this Policy is to lay guidelines regarding authorization and proper handling of electronic equipment provided by Association For Voluntary Action (“AVA” or “the Organization”).

## 2. Scope

This Information Technology & Communications Policy (“**this Policy**”) is applicable to all applies to the employees either on AVA’s rolls or employed through any third party, who have been given any electronic equipment for official use which is owned by, or leased in AVA’s name.

## 3. Objective

Communication is integral for improving productivity of the Organization. Use of tools like Laptop, mobile phones—have been part of the cultural reshaping of the workplace over the last decade. During unprecedented times like Covid, it is more important that all the employees stay connected on a regular basis without any disruption to the Organization’s work and priorities. At AVA, our endeavour is to provide best communication tools to our employees which leads to better ideas and solutions and eventually leading to improved productivity.

This Policy aims to lay down the regulations and guidelines for procurement, judicious and harmonious use of all Information Technology & Communication Devices provided by AVA to all associates, at all times.

## 4. Definitions

**Administration Department:** The dedicated department in AVA that is involved in general administration, functioning and procurement of assets of the Organization;

**Associate:** shall mean and include all employees/staff on rolls of AVA, volunteers, trustees, members of the Board of Trustees and members of any of the committees of AVA;

**Electronic Equipment:** refers to laptop, mobile phones, tablets, desktop, any smart device, Data Card, Camera, Scanner and any other IT asset that is issued to associate by the Organization, and may not necessarily and always be located on AVA facility;

**Information Technology & Communication Devices:** shall mean and include Electronic equipment's, servers, network device wired/wireless, internet access, official website, web applications, official e-mail address, data storage, documentation facility (printers/scanners), voice recorders, and multimedia of the Organization;

**IT Department:** The dedicated department in AVA which implements and monitors this Policy;

**Procurement;** This shall be governed by Procurement Policy.

## 5. Issuance & Access to Information Technology & Communication Device

- i. Any Information Technology & Communication Device shall be issued to the Associate as per the nature of their work; upon request from the concerned Director and approval by the HR Department
- ii. Other temporary associates such as guests/visitors/volunteers/interns/consultants may be given access to Information Technology & Communication Device in special cases subject to authorization by the concerned Director under whose supervision the individual is working;
- iii. Each Associate shall be assigned only one laptop/desktop computer/ mobile phone. More than one computer shall be purchased if a separate IT device may be required for any activities like training and capacity building, research etc. The request for the same shall be accompanied with prior written approval by an appropriate authority;
- iv. Data card shall be issued after the requisition is submitted to the IT Department via email with prior approval of the Director - Operations, AVA. An Associate shall use the data cards for official purposes only
- v. All Associates shall be responsible for the upkeep/maintenance and safe custody of the data card during their employment.

### 5.1 Guidelines for Usage of Electronic Equipment and Cell Phones

- i. Any Electronic Equipment allocated to an Associate remains the sole property of AVA. However, the Associate, to whom the any of the Electronic Equipment is assigned, shall remain responsible for ensuring safe use of device until he/she resigns. Thereafter, it shall be returned to IT department. HR department must inform IT department regarding recruitment or

- termination of contract of associates well in advance to ensure timely arrangement of equipment;
- ii. All devices issued to the Associate must be brought to the office premises every day and shall be transported/stored carefully so that it is not susceptible to damage;
  - iii. While in office, the laptop shall never be left unattended after office hours or during weekends, holidays, etc. It shall be stored only in locked desk/cabinet. Specifically, the laptop shall not be left inside a room/vehicle where extreme temperatures can permanently damage the unit and/or its components are visible, risking theft
  - iv. Desktops shall be placed in the allotted workstation of concerned Associate only. If required, transportation of desktop computer shall be carried with prior written approval of the IT department and only in presence of an IT staff;
  - v. No personal identifying marks including, but not limited to; including adhesive labels/stickers shall be placed on the Electronic equipment's;
  - vi. Water, food, inflammable, corrosive items etc. have to be kept away from the laptop/desktop/mobile. Cost of repairs due to any damage caused by spillage shall be borne by the Associate;
  - vii. Associates issued with laptops, mobile phones, desktops, printer and any other IT accessories must take the utmost care in preventing theft damage and loss of the equipment;
  - viii. In the event of loss or theft of Electronic Equipment outside the office, the concerned Associate must immediately: (a) register a First Information Report (FIR) immediately and; (b) intimate his/her reporting manager as well as the IT Department via written communication along with a copy of the FIR;
  - ix. Screen/keyboard or any surface of Electronic Equipment to be cleaned only with standard cleaner (can be issued from Administration). Cleaning with use of detergents and/or any other liquid can cause permanent damage to the laptop/desktop computer. Cost of repairing any damage due to such usage shall be borne by the Associate;
  - x. In case of any damages to the Electronic Equipment due to the Associate's negligence/failure to follow procedures mentioned in this Policy, the Associate shall bear the cost of repairs or replacement. AVA reserves the right to recover the cost of repairs from the Associate's salary if the Associate fails to make requisite payment(s);
  - xi. If any equipment is lost due to Associate's negligence, s/he shall be responsible for the replacement of the equipment.
  - xii. Office printers shall be configured automatically on laptops/computers. Associates are advised not to configure personal printers in office Electronic Equipment;

- xiii. The Electronic Equipment and any other accessories/components shall be returned in good working condition immediately upon resignation/termination of the contract. Further, the HR department shall inform the IT Department promptly of such developments;
- xiv. Cell phones shall not be used if posing a security or safety risk, or if acting as distractions from assigned tasks/activities and/or in meetings;

## **5.2 Annual Maintenance Contract(“AMC”)/Support/Repair/Insurance**

- i. All Electronic Equipment (except for mobile phones) purchased/to be purchased shall be under three years’ warranty onsite support, which must cover the replacement of faulty parts. After completion of the warranty duration, one year extended Warranty/AMC shall be enabled (depending upon the Brand). In case of mobile phones, the non-extendable warranty shall be for 2 years;
- ii. Broken equipment shall be reported to the IT Department immediately. A service provider may be engaged if the equipment cannot be repaired internally. Cost for repairing shall be approved by the reporting manager. In case repairing cost is more than 50% of the broken equipment, IT department can recommend to purchase new equipment. Final decision shall rest with the Director – Operations, AVA.

## **5.3 Computer, Server, Phone & Printer Replacement**

- i. All Electronic Equipment issued to the associate shall continue to remain in use as long as they remain in working condition and subject to a minimum utilization life of 3 years in respect of laptops, 2 years in the case of mobile phones and 4 years in respect of desktop computer (“Utilization Period”);
- ii. Post the prescribed Utilization Period, the Electronic Equipment shall be considered for a replacement. These equipment replacements are subject to an initial check process by the IT Department;
- iii. For replacing a printer, Multi-Function Printers (“MFP”) and servers, a five-year period shall be considered. Post this period, warranty for MFP and Server that are still in working condition and support contract can be renewed with the Original Equipment Manufacturer (“OEM”), in lieu of replacement

## **5.4 E-Waste Disposal and handling of Old Electronic Equipment**

After replacement of an Electronic Equipment, the old device shall be kept under safe custody and maintenance prior to their disposal, to avoid increase



in dead cost. The Electronic Equipment's shall be disposed-off as per the applicable laws of E-waste disposal. The objective is to dispose of at the highest depreciated cost for the disposal and complete record of the retired equipment must be maintained by IT Department with a copy to Finance.

## **5.5 Installation & Access to Software**

- i. Installation of any software would be done only by the IT staff or with prior written permission from the IT Department;
- ii. Standard and necessary software shall be installed on the laptop/desktop computer. A requirement for any other specific software shall have to be requested through a special request form duly approved by the Director - Operations, AVA;
- iii. AVA uses genuine and licensed software only. Any attempt to download, install or use pirated software shall be considered as a breach of this Policy and necessary actions shall be initiated;
- iv. Associates are allowed to use open-source, freeware software, applications (for official purposes only), if stated in the software agreement, provided that the software does not hamper/damage the Electronic Equipment and if found so; the IT Department reserves the rights to remove the same;
- v. Software like PC games, torrent applications, even if they are freeware, are not allowed to be installed on Electronic Equipment;
- vi. Certain software or applications like anti-virus, backup, etc. must be installed in the Electronic Equipment by IT Department for protection and smooth functioning. Associates would not have the right to remove/uninstall/disable them. If it is found that such software is affecting the performance of any Electronic Equipment, the Associate shall notify the IT department;
- vii. Software and applications provided for official use cannot be transferred to any personal devices. The responsibility of keys/passwords of licenses of purchased software and keeping them in safe custody rests with IT department.

## **5.6 Access to Data Files and Backup**

- i. Associates are requested to store only official data in their Electronic Equipment;
- ii. Any corrupted data, files, etc. shall be deleted or rectified with assistance from IT Department only;
- iii. The IT Department may access these files, after informing the associate, for audit and regular maintenance purposes;
- iv. The IT Department has the rights to delete any objectionable data and files and shall inform the Associate accordingly;

- v. Associates shall handover all the official data to their reporting manager at the time of leaving the organization. Official emails and data shall not be deleted at the time of handover and this may be verified by the reporting manager/HR at the time of handover at the request of the IT department;
- vi. Associates shall perform regular backups of their data;
- vii. Only official data shall be backed up using software or manually, for specific associates. Only certain type of files shall be backed up;
- viii. Restoration of such data shall be done upon request, subject to availability of the last backup;
- ix. Frequency of the data backup shall be fixed by the IT Department and may vary for all associates;
- x. IT Department shall not be responsible for any data corruption, loss or damage if the files and systems are not maintained as per this Policy;
- xi. The IT department upon finding a non-compliant Electronic Equipment shall notify the individual responsible for the system and ask that it be brought into compliance. Such notification shall be done via email/telephone and a copy of the notification shall be sent to the HR, if applicable. The IT Department shall guide as needed for the individual to gain compliance

## **5.8 Internet and Network Usage**

- i. The IT department is responsible for the ongoing maintenance and support of the internet connectivity servers and network, exclusive of local applications;
- ii. Issues within the AVA's network faced by any associate shall be reported to the IT Department;
- iii. The internet provided to an associate within the office shall be behind a firewall and within Local Area Network (LAN). The Internet is to be used for official purpose only;
- iv. The firewall automatically blocks access to sites categorized as entertainment, pornography, torrents, etc. At times, access to some blocked websites may be required for the official purpose by the associate. The IT Department may unblock them upon request after analyzing those sites;
- v. Wi-Fi access may be allowed only for Electronic Equipment;
- vi. Guest Wi-Fi access may be given to AVA's guests through guest login;
- vii. Associates are allowed to download as much data as necessary for official purposes. However, if there are data/files of huge size, if not urgent, they may be downloaded after-office hours. This shall help smoother distribution of internet and not affect other associates' access to the internet

## 5.9 Usage of Official E-mail System

- i. AVA shall make its electronic mail system available to all associates (excluding volunteers/interns/guests and such other temporary associates) through the provision of individual organizational account, and generate requisite credentials to be shared with concerned associates for authorized use only;
- ii. Group emails/distribution lists shall be created upon requests, subject to availability and approval by the Director - Operations, AVA;
- iii. All Associates bear the responsibility to maintain AVA's image through use of these electronic resources productively and must avoid placing the Organization at risk of legal liabilities through any untoward communications undertaken via official email;
- iv. All messages distributed via the email server, even personal emails on Electronic Equipment, shall become sole property of AVA. No Associate can claim privacy to any content which is created, stored, sent or received thereon;
- v. It is strictly prohibited to use AVA's email system for any purpose other than legitimate purposes related to an associate's work and in the discharge of his/her duties. Therefore, exchanging personal emails, chain letters, junk mail, jokes and such other irrelevant communications over email is prohibited;
- vi. If any Associate receives any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating message(s) via AVA's email system, s/he is requested to inform his/her reporting manager and/or the IT staff immediately. Such content shall be traced as quickly as possible and necessary action must be taken;
- vii. AVA reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the official electronic mail system for any purpose;
- viii. In case of a situation when an email account is compromised, IT shall reset the password of that account immediately and intimation shall be given to the concerned associate via text message or on his/her personal email address;
- ix. In case of resignation/termination of an associate, his/her official email ID shall be immediately disabled and put on three-month retention. The email address would be viewed by an authorized representative to assess if any important messages are received twice a week and who shall respond to the sender. Post this period, no email shall be retrieved. HR and IT departments must work in close coordination with each other to ensure that there is no delay.

## **5.10 Domain Names**

- i. Any request(s) for new website or web application development shall be routed through IT Department;
- ii. Request(s) for new domain name registrations, URLs, sub-domains shall be given to the IT Department and shall be considered by the IT staff after approval from CEO, subject to availability;
- iii. Decisions pertaining to hosting locations lies with the IT Department, with approval from the CEO; the team shall consider all technological and economic factors to take this decision.

## **5.11 Maintenance of Security Standards for Issued Electronic Equipment**

- i. For security purposes, every Associate is expected to keep his/her passwords (for computers, email, etc.) safe. Associates shall also lock down their systems before leaving their respective seats/ terminals;
- ii. No Associate shall provide access to his/her laptop/desktop computer/Internet/official mail, etc. to any external persons without prior permission from the IT Department;
- iii. Passwords shall not be stored in computer data files, on the network, or be displayed openly at any workstation

## **5.12 Maintenance of Overall IT-Related Infrastructure**

- i. Unauthorized access to or use of computer/server rooms is permitted;
- ii. Any IT related equipment which is to be removed/transferred from AVA's Premises must be approved in advance with the IT Department. This shall be documented, including the product version, manufacturers and serial numbers on an IT Inventory Form, and a gate pass shall be issued. Requisite inventory of this equipment shall be maintained;
- iii. Any associate causing damage to the Electronic Equipment and assets of AVA, shall be liable to face necessary disciplinary action including; and upto termination;
- iv. IT Department shall conduct regular IT equipment audit and maintenance. Intimation regarding any temporary or permanent shut down of services shall be provided to all concerned associates in advance.

## **6. Compliance and Violations of Policy**

- 6.1** An Associate who violates this Policy, regardless of whether financial loss to the Organization results or not, may receive appropriate disciplinary action up to, and including termination. This shall be in addition to other legal and remedial actions available to the Organization under applicable law.
- 6.2** An Associate who violates this Policy shall also indemnify and hold harmless the Organization against any and all liability, claims, suits, losses, damages, costs and legal fees caused by, resulting/arising out of the violation thereof;
- 6.3** In case of non-compliance, the IT Department shall notify the individual responsible for the system and ask that it be brought into compliance. Such notification shall be done via e-mail/telephone and a copy of notification shall be sent to HR, if applicable. The individual associate shall follow-up the notification to be certain that his/her computer gains necessary compliance. The IT department shall provide guidance as needed for the individual to gain compliance;
- 6.4** All Associates must handle all confidential information that they might access during their course of association with AVA in consonance with the clauses pertaining to Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

## **7. Exceptions and Review of Policy**

- 7.1** Any deviations from this policy require approval from the Management Committee.
- 7.2** The Organization reserves the right to modify and/or review the provisions of this Policy from time to time, in order to comply with applicable legal requirements or internal policies, to the extent necessary.







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