

Use of University Resources

The University resources available within UW Facilities, including but not limited to computers, telephones, equipment, tools and vehicles, are the property of the UW Facilities, and are to be used for the purpose of departmental business only.

University employees may not use state resources in any form for personal benefit or gain, or for the benefit or gain of any other individuals or outside organizations. Improper use of University resources and/or a State Ethics Board violation may result in corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

The University reserves the right to access and review University computers and accounts of any kind at any time and for any reason, with or without notice. UW Facilities employees should understand that their University email accounts, computer files, telephone records and communications are not private and may be made public.

The State Ethics Board interprets “occasional”, “brief” and “infrequent” use of a University resource to mean that the use is not more than once a day and lasts a few minutes, so long as there is no disruption to an employee’s work or to the work of others.

Employees may occasionally use University computers and telephones for limited personal communication only if it:

- Is of little or no cost to the state
- Is brief in duration and occurs infrequently
- Does not interfere with the employee's official duties
- Does not disrupt University business
- Does not disrupt other employees or obligate them to make personal use of state resources
- Does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information and/or software

PROHIBITED USE

University resources may not be used in any manner that is in violation of UW Facilities, University, state or federal laws, rules, or policies or to violate the rights of any third party. Additionally, University resources may never be used for the following purposes:

- Conducting an outside business or private employment or other activities conducted for private financial gain.
- Supporting, promoting, or soliciting for an outside organization or group unless otherwise provided by law and University policy.

- Assisting an election campaign, promoting or opposing a ballot proposition or initiative, or lobbying the state legislature
- Advertising and selling commercial goods

COMPUTERS AND EMAIL

State law prohibits the use of University computers to access computer networks or other databases, including but not limited to the Internet and electronic mail, for personal and/or commercial business, campaign or political purposes, to promote an outside business or group, or to conduct illegal activities. All hardware, software and data stored on the University computers and/or databases are property of Facilities Services. Additionally, employees are prohibited from allowing any member of the public to make personal use of a University computer and/or computing resources. Email and other uses of University computers may constitute an Ethics violation if the use is political, commercial, or excessive.

EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, AND MATERIALS

University owned equipment, tools, materials, and supplies may only be used in the performance of University job duties and may never be used for personal use. UW Facilities tools and equipment may not be loaned to contractors or students without written approval. Salvaged, broken, or junked equipment, tools, materials, and supplies are University property, are not for personal use, and may not be removed from the campus.

TELEPHONES

Occasional and limited use of University telephones including cell phones, smartphones, Nextel pagers, and hand held devices, is permissible if there is no actual cost to the state and if the call is brief and infrequent and does not interfere with the performance of an employee's job duties. Personal long distance calls are unacceptable.

UNIVERSITY VEHICLES

University vehicles may only be used for official University business. University vehicles may not be driven to private establishments, including banks and eateries, even during designated lunch and/or break times. Rare exceptions to allow for the use of a University vehicle may be made when if an employee is on an extended off campus trip or if the employee is on call. Except in rare circumstances, University vehicles are not to be driven on walkways or landscaped grounds. At no time, is it permissible for a University vehicle to be parked in a disability parking space and/or obscure disabled access on pathways, walkways, and sidewalks. University vehicles are subject to citation when blocking a fire lane or when parked in spaces designated for wheelchair and disabled parking or reserved parking.

Employees who operate a State owned vehicle must have a valid driver license recognized by Washington State and be familiar with and abide by the Motor Pool Policies (Administrative Policy Statement 53.2), Parking and Traffic Regulations (WAC 478-116), and State and local laws.

If an employee's driver license or commercial driver license (CDL) is suspended or revoked, he or she must inform his or her supervisor immediately. Parking tickets and citations for moving violations are the responsibility of the designated driver. Operating a University vehicle without a valid driver license or CDL, unsafe driving and/or repeated violations may result in corrective action, up to and including dismissal.

Vehicles should never be left unlocked or running and vehicle keys and key-cards to restricted parking areas must be safeguarded.

Accidents involving University owned vehicles must be reported immediately to the University Police, whether or not there appears to be personal injury, property damage or damage to the vehicle. An employee in an accident involving a University-owned vehicle must complete the CEI Accident Report Form which is located in the glove box of all University vehicles. More information can be found at: [UW Facilities Fleet Services - UW Vehicle Accident Reporting](#)

RELATED POLICIES

Administrative Policy 47.2 Personal Use of University Facilities, Computers, and Equipment by University Employees

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/APS/47.02.html>

Washington Administrative Code 292-110-010 Use of state resources

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=292-110-010>

State Ethics Board <http://www.ethics.wa.gov/>

Ethics Personal use of State Resources & Conflict of Interest

<https://hr.uw.edu/policies/ethics/>

UW IT Connect Appropriate Use of UW Resources

<https://itconnect.uw.edu/security/security-and-privacy-policies/>

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers Regarding Personal Use of the Internet on UW Computers & Smartphones

It is helpful to keep in mind that UW Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 47.2, which is based on state ethics law, addresses personal use of University resources.

Q1: “Can I check my personal Gmail and/or Facebook account on a UW computer/UW-issued smartphone while on my designated break or during lunch break?”

A1: APS 47.2 does outline both prohibited personal uses of University resources (e.g., conducting an outside business or endorsing political candidates or ballot measures) and limited personal uses which include the examples of:

- Electronic communication with children and dependents.
- Scheduling personal appointments.

If an employee is checking their personal Gmail to scan their inbox for the newest Groupon or daily deal from Best Buy, or is accessing their personal Facebook to check out their friends’ vacation photos – No, the employee should NOT use their UW computer/smartphone for that, regardless of whether they are on their designated break/lunch time or not. In the highly unlikely event that employees are using their UW computer/smartphone to access Facebook or Gmail in order to communicate with their health care provider to set up an medical/dental appointment or to check to make sure their child arrived home from school safely – Yes, the employee may be able to do that once a day or so without running afoul of the ethics law.

The State Ethics Board takes a very narrow view of permissible personal use of UW computers/smartphones. They have published the opinion that: “An employee makes a telephone call or sends an e-mail message to his/her children to make sure that they have arrived home safely from school. This is not an ethical violation. So long as the call or e-mail is brief in duration, there is little or no cost to the state, i.e., your SCAN [long distance calling] code is not used, and sending a brief message does not interfere with the performance of official duties.”

They have further addressed the meaning of “occasional”, “brief” and “infrequent”: “While these terms have not been formally defined, staff has interpreted them to mean just that: the use is no more than once a day and lasts a few minutes, so long as there is no disruption to your work or to the work of others”. So even for an allowable use, such as an employee checking in with their children, the Ethics Board expects that it will happen no more than once a day.

APS 47.2 and the state ethics laws address use of University resources. Employees can use their own smartphone to surf the web on their designated break and/or lunch time.

Q2. “Can I Google product info, business locations, maps & directions in the course of my job?”

A2: University resources are provided to employees to assist them in doing their job. Ten years ago you would have had print catalogs and hard copy maps – now you have access to electronic information. Employees should use the best source of information to do their job. APS 47.2 is concerned with personal use of UW resources.

Q3. “Can I check news websites like The Seattle Times, The New York Times, etc.?”

A3: If checking news websites ISN'T part of an employee's job, the employee should NOT surf the web to visit news websites using their UW computer/smartphone. While on designated break/lunch time, an employee can check the headlines of hard copy newspapers and/or use their personal smartphone to check news websites.

Q4: “Can I use my work computer to listen to/stream internet radio while at work?”

A4: No. To use the internet radio takes up a bandwidth, and goes beyond a de minimis use.”

If your department uses social media to promote the department and/or services provided, please consult the UW Social Media Guidelines:

<http://www.washington.edu/marketing/social-media-best-practices/social-media-guidelines/>