Use of District Resources Policy (#003)  
Person Responsible: Board of Fire Commissioners

Purpose

The term “District Resources”, as used in this policy, includes District station facilities, equipment, communication systems, computer hardware and software, telecommunications hardware, software and data, internet access services, telephone, and electronic mail systems, and all District tangible and intangible property.

Authority

RCW 42.17A.555  
WAC 292-110-010  
Washington State Constitution: Article 8, Section 7

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Policy:

A. District officers and employees are obligated to conserve and protect District resources for the benefit of the public interest, rather than their private interests. Use of District resources shall be limited to the uses that support organizational effectiveness, are reasonable and of negligible cost, and that do not violate ethics laws or this policy. Responsibility and accountability for the appropriate use of District resources ultimately rests with the individual District officer and employee, or with the District officer or employee who authorizes such use.

B. District officers or employees may not use District resources including any person, money, or property under the officer’s or employee’s official control or direction or in his or her custody for private benefit or gain of the officer or employee or any other person. This prohibition does not apply to the use of District resources to benefit another person as part of the officer’s or employee’s official duties.

C. The following are prohibited uses of District resources:

1. Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business.

2. Any use for the purpose of supporting, promoting, or soliciting for an outside organization or group unless provided for by the law or authorized by the District Chief Officer or designee.
3. Any use for the purpose of campaigns or politics.

4. Commercial use such as advertising or selling.

5. Any use for the purpose of illegal activity.

6. A District officer or employee may not use District resources for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition. Such use of District resources is not authorized by this policy and is specifically prohibited by RCW 42.17A.555, subject to the exceptions in RCW 42.17A.555.

7. A District officer or employee may not make private use of any District property that has been removed from District facilities or other official duty stations, even if there is no cost to the District.

8. A District officer or employee may not make private use of any District property that is consumable such as paper, envelopes, or spare parts, even if the actual cost to the District is de minimis.

9. A District officer or employee may not use District computers or other equipment to access computer networks containing offensive or pornographic materials or other data bases nor shall they use District computers to distribute offensive or pornographic materials.

D. In general, a District officer or employee may not make private use of District resources and then reimburse the District so there is no actual cost to the District. However, the Board recognizes that in some limited situations, a system of reimbursement may be appropriate. Any system of reimbursement must be established by the District in advance and must result in no cost to the District. To be valid under this policy, the Board must approve a reimbursement system.

E. The District is often requested to participate in local and regional fundraisers and community events either through donations, use of resources or other participation. As a municipal corporation, the District is restricted by the Washington State Constitution’s prohibition on the gifting of public funds. See Article 8, Section 7 However, The Board has determined that participation in certain events and support of community organizations is important to the organizational effectiveness of the District. The community relations benefits received by the District provide a corresponding benefit to the District. The District’s participation in such events shall be governed by the following basic principles:

F. Community Events and Fundraiser Participation:

1. **Organizational Effectiveness:** The District shall only participate in local and regional fundraisers and community events if the participation promotes
Organizational Effectiveness. Organizational Effectiveness relates to the District’s mission of providing fire protection, fire prevention, fire suppression and emergency medical services. Activities that enhance or augment the District’s ability to perform its mission by educating the public, promoting a positive perception of the District, or enhancing the job-related skills of District personnel will be deemed to be organizationally effective.

2. De Minimis Use of Resources: Because of the prohibition on gifting, use of District resources in support of events that promote organizational effectiveness must not exceed a de minimis use in accordance with WAC292-110-010.

Adopted 02/16/2005, Amended 12/12/2022, Reviewed 11/27/2023