

XYZ Legal Communications Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 XYZ Legal's communications facilities are provided by XYZ Legal and made available to users for the purposes of the business. All use of our communications facilities is governed by the terms of this policy, and if our rules and procedures are not adhered to, then use of our facilities may be curtailed or withdrawn and disciplinary action may thereafter follow. Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you and serious breaches may lead to dismissal.
- 1.2 At XYZ Legal, communication plays an essential role in the conduct of our business. How you communicate with people not only reflects on you as an individual but also on us as an organisation. We value your ability to communicate with colleagues, clients and business contacts, and we invest substantially in information technology and communications systems which enable you to work more efficiently. We trust you to use them responsibly.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all individuals working for XYZ Legal who use our communications facilities, whether full-time, part-time or casual employees, interns, secondees, cadets, contract staff or volunteers.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 In communicating with clients, other employees and third parties, employees should always conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- 2.2 In communicating with clients, other employees and third parties, employees must act in accordance with their obligations as governed by the ***Legal Profession Uniform Law Australian Solicitors' Conduct Rules 2015 (NSW)***; including, but not limited to, matters of confidentiality.
- 2.3 In communicating with clients, other employees and third parties, employees must act in accordance with their obligations under the ***Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)***; including, but not limited to, disclosure of personal information.
- 2.4 All technology should be used in a manner that is compliant with the XYZ Legal WH&S Policy and the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (NSW)***.
- 2.5 You must use XYZ Legal's information technology and communications facilities sensibly, professionally, lawfully, and consistently with your duties, with respect for your colleagues and for XYZ Legal and in accordance with this policy and XYZ Legal's other policies and procedures.
- 2.6 All information relating to our clients/customers and our business operations is confidential. You must treat our paper-based and electronic information with utmost care.

- 2.7 Many aspects of communication are protected by intellectual property rights under the **Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)** which are infringed by copying. Downloading, uploading, posting, copying, possessing, processing and distributing material from the internet may be an infringement of copyright or of other intellectual property rights.
- 2.8 Particular care must be taken when using email, XYZ Legal's intranet, company blog or internal message boards as a means of communication because all expressions of fact, intention and opinion in an email may bind you and/or XYZ Legal and can be produced in court in the same way as other kinds of written statements.
- 2.9 The advantage of the internet and email is that they are extremely easy and informal ways of accessing and disseminating information, but this means that it is also easy to send out ill-considered statements. All messages sent on email systems or via the internet should demonstrate the same professionalism as that which would be taken when writing a letter or a fax. You must not use these media to do or say anything which would be subject to disciplinary or legal action in any other context such as sending any discriminatory (on the grounds of a person's sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief), defamatory, or other unlawful material (for example, any material that is designed to be, or could be construed as, bullying or harassment by the recipient). If you are in doubt about a course of action, take advice from your manager.

3. **USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL**

- 3.1 Ensure that the recipient's name is spelt correctly.
- 3.2 Include a clear subject line.
- 3.3 Always include your name and job title in the footer of the email.
- 3.4 Ensure your email is professional by refraining from using exclamation marks, contractions and humour.
- 3.5 Do not send an email before proofing for errors.

4. **USE OF INTERNET AND INTRANET**

- 4.1 We trust you to use the internet sensibly. Bear in mind at all times that, when visiting a website, information identifying your PC may be logged. Therefore any activity you engage in via the internet may affect XYZ Legal.
- 4.2 You are not permitted to provide your XYZ Legal email address when using public websites for non-business purposes, such as online shopping.
- 4.3 You must not:
- 4.3.1 access or try to access data which you know or ought to know is confidential;

- 4.3.2 intentionally or recklessly introduce any form of spyware, computer virus or other potentially malicious software; nor
- 4.3.3 carry out any hacking activities
- 4.3.4 use XYZ Legal's systems to participate in any internet chat room or post messages on any external website, including any message board or blog, unless expressly permitted in writing to do so by XYZ Legal.

5. **SOCIAL MEDIA**

- 5.1 Employees should be aware of the effect their actions may have on XYZ Legal's image. The information that employees post or publish may be public information for a long time.
- 5.2 Employees should be aware that XYZ Legal may observe content and information made available by employees through social media. Employees should use their best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate nor harmful to XYZ Legal, its employees, or customers.
- 5.3 Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, or that can create a hostile work environment.
- 5.4 Employees are not to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public.
- 5.5 Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Employees should refer these inquiries to authorized XYZ Legal spokespersons.
- 5.6 If employees encounter a situation while using social media that threatens to become antagonistic, employees should disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner and seek the advice of a manager.
- 5.7 Employees should get appropriate permission before referring to or posting images of current or former employees, members, vendors or suppliers. Additionally, employees should get appropriate permission to use a third party's copyrights, copyrighted material, trademarks, service marks or other intellectual property.
- 5.8 Social media use shouldn't interfere with employee's responsibilities at XYZ Legal. XYZ Legal's computer systems are to be used for business purposes only.
- 5.9 Subject to applicable law, after-hours online activity that violates the XYZ Legal Code of Conduct or any other company policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action or dismissal.
- 5.10 Employees must keep XYZ Legal related social media accounts separate from personal accounts.

6. MEETING MINUTES

- 6.1 Meeting minutes must be recorded using the Minutes template.
- 6.2 Minutes must be complete, accurate, succinct, and easy to read.