

May 3, 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL IRS EXECUTIVES

FROM:

Bob Wenzel

Deputy Commissioner of Internal Revenue



SUBJECT:

IRS Policy on Limited Personal Use of Government Information  
Technology Equipment/Resources

Given the rapidly expanding use of Internet and e-mail as today's primary sources of information and personal communication, the Service is implementing a limited personal use policy for Internet, e-mail and other equipment and resources. The purpose of this memorandum is to highlight the important features of the new policy and to enlist your support in ensuring a successful implementation. The new policy will be effective

May 13, 2002.

#### Key Features of the Limited Personal Use Policy

Personal use policies are now in place in Treasury and other government agencies. Within specified restrictions, the IRS limited personal use policy gives employees the privilege of using Government office equipment, including information technology, for non-governmental purposes. However, this new policy applies only to those who already have access to these resources for business purposes. It *does not expand* Internet or e-mail access to those who do not otherwise have it.

For those employees who have access, limited personal use will be permitted when such use:

- results in minimal additional expense to the Government and does not overburden any of the Service's information resources;
- occurs during non-work hours for reasonable duration and frequency;
- does not adversely affect the performance of official duties or the mission of the Service; and
- does not violate the Codes of Ethical Conduct for employees.

I hope that the privilege of having the Internet and E-mail resource available for limited personal use will facilitate a more supportive work environment. However, it is important to emphasize that with personal use comes increased personal responsibility.

To ensure successful implementation, it is very important to adhere to the restrictions set forth in this policy. The restrictions are necessary to protect network security and

infrastructure, and also to meet public expectations that the IRS will maintain the highest standards of integrity in using government resources.

### Safeguards Are Essential for Protecting System Security and Maintaining Integrity

To ensure that the Service minimizes its risk and maintains the integrity of its networks, we have established systems capable of blocking access to inappropriate sites and of monitoring Internet use at individual workstations. This monitoring will ensure that we identify and correct violations of the policy that could expose the IRS to security and systems risks similar to those that accompanied our recent exposure to the NIMDA virus. We are working with NTEU to finalize the safeguarding process.

It is important to emphasize that IRS employees do not have a right, nor should they have an expectation of privacy while using government information technology equipment/resources including accessing the Internet or using e-mail. To the extent that employees wish to maintain their privacy, they should avoid personal use of these resources. Unlike use of our Intranet, which is considered an integral part of our internal communication resources and does include an expectation of privacy for users, Internet and e-mail use are not private and not anonymous.

### Leadership and Communication are Critical

I ask for your personal support in implementing this new policy. Using the contents of this memorandum and the attached IRS Policy on Limited Personal Use of Government Information Technology Equipment/Resources, please make sure that your management teams understand and communicate to eligible employees the responsibilities that accompany this new privilege. Look for additional information, including a formal employee announcement, and some Q&A's about the various aspects of the policy on the IRS Intranet and in other communications over the coming weeks.

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Tomaso, Director Tax Administration Coordination (202-622-7194), or Gary Doniger Acting Deputy Director, Tax Administration Coordination (202-622-6972). Thank you all for your cooperation.

Attachment

cc: National President, National Treasury Employees Union