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MESSAGE FOR ALL DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

FROM: ARCHER L. DURHAM
ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
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SUBJECT: APPROPRIATE USE OF THE INTERNET

The advent of the Internet makes it possible for us to access a vast array of information to assist us with our day-to-day work. Like many high technology, information-based enterprises, the Department of Energy provides access to the Internet for many of its employees and contractors to increase productivity and facilitate collaboration. Due to the easy access and open culture of the Internet, there are many types of information available for both work-related and recreational uses. As organizations begin to exploit the vast potential of the Internet, issues of appropriate use quickly arise.

Over the past several months, the Department of Energy and its contractors have discovered occasional incidents of misuse of Government equipment and duty time for what constitutes unofficial business and, in some circumstances, illegal activity. This misuse of Government resources is not acceptable and constitutes a serious breach of our core values. Among those activities considered inappropriate are conducting personal business, playing games, gambling, or viewing sexually explicit material. Use of Government equipment and official duty time for these non-work related activities is a violation of law and our standards of conduct. As a result of misuse, a number of employees have been counseled, officially reprimanded, or had their employment terminated. Criminal charges have been placed in at least one case.

As public servants, we are expected to hold ourselves to the highest standards of behavior and stewardship. As managers and supervisors, we should remind our employees of the risks associated with inappropriate use of official time and Government equipment. Appropriate disciplinary action is the expected consequence of such misuse of Government resources. While these isolated incidents do not reflect the general behavior of our workforce, the potential for abuse and the associated consequences should be a special subject to be discussed with your staff. Our policy of zero tolerance for the inappropriate use of the internet should be clearly understood and followed by all.