

Practice Information



2010 OUTSTANDING MEMBER Award

Guidelines/Application

The Outstanding Member Award is given to a member in even years and is nominated by his/her peers.

Nominations must be submitted to Chairman of CODP or VNA Headquarters no later than August 31, 2010

The award may be given to a member only once.

The recipient will be honored at the Delegate Assembly on September 17, 2010

Describe the nominee's contributions to VNA (State and District level) as measured by:

- innovative ideas
- special projects or activities
- support of District and State Association
- attendance at meetings, workshops etc. and volunteerism

Describe the nominee's activities in the following areas:

- positive interpersonal relationships with peers and VNA
- enthusiasm and role modeling
- leadership abilities and dedication to profession
- integrity—upholds Nursing Code of Ethics
- community and professional activities
- willingness to take a stand on professional issues
- mentoring activities and/or other special attributes.

OUTSTANDING MEMBER'S AWARD FORM

(Nominee Attach Vitae/Resume)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

VNA DISTRICT: _____

RN LICENSE NUMBER if known: _____

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Health Practitioners in the Workplace Are Your Electronic Communications Private?

Whether it's an employer-provided mobile phone used to send text messages, the practice's voice mail system, or the office computer where employees access the internet, there's a good chance your employer is monitoring your workplace communications.

As many employers have found themselves entangled in legal action, trying to explain the reasoning behind an employee's damaging email message, employers are becoming more aware of the legal risks of electronic communication—especially communication that occurs on any electronic device owned by the employer or provided to the employee by the employer.

As a way to protect themselves proactively, employers often monitor the communications that occur on employer-owned electronic devices. These communications are especially important, as they create an electronic "paper trail" that an employer may be forced to produce in the event of legal action.

While some electronic monitoring equipment may allow an employer to track an employee's communication without the employees' knowledge, many employers provide notice in employee handbooks, through warning messages communicated via the specified electronic device, or through various office communications such as memos or announcements.

The communications of some health care employees may be subject to a lesser degree of scrutiny. This could possibly include those who have union contracts, or in those practice settings where the employer specifically exempts certain communications. However, there are typically exceptions to these rules as well, and most employers have the ability to monitor at some level.

It was once thought that public employees might have greater rights under the Fourth Amendment's safeguards against unreasonable search and seizure. However, a June, 2010 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, *City of Ontario vs. Quon*, further supports an employer's ability to monitor and log employee communications on workplace electronic devices. Although this particular case applies to the public employment sector, it is expected that private employers will use it as a guideline for monitoring employee communications.

The bottom line is that an employer may monitor your communication on an employer-provided electronic device, if your employer has a work-related purpose for examining your communications.

If the message is something you wouldn't want your employer to know, or if the communication or internet research is unrelated to your work, refrain from the communication. Keep your professional and personal communication separate.

Below are questions health practitioners often ask about electronic communications.

I don't know my employer's policies.

What can I do to find out?

First, check with your employer to determine what policies are currently in place related to workplace electronic devices and/or rules related to electronic information or communications. If your employer does not have a written policy, you may want to discuss the matter with your employer to determine what monitoring process are in place. It should also be noted that employees who use a personal electronic device to access a workplace-provided email or voice mail system remotely may be subject to the same policies as well.

I send text messages to my daughter on my business cell phone; are these messages private?

Most likely not. The recent Supreme Court decision in *City of Ontario vs. Quon* determined that the employer's search of the cell phone of a police officer who sent sexually explicit messages on an employer-provided device was acceptable. While this case involved a public sector employee, the principle will be used to guide private sector employers.

I use my workplace computer to access my private web-based email account. Can my employer monitor my private email?

Electronic monitoring technologies enable an employer to track the digital footprint of any communication occurring on workplace-provided electronic devices, including web-based email accounts such as gmail or hotmail. If your employer owns the terminal, cell phone, i-phone, or any other electronic device used to access your personal email, you should assume your communication is not private. ♦

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