

Introduction

This Acceptable Use Policy is to protect Gardonville Cooperative Telephone Association (Gardonville) and also Wisper High-Speed Internet by Gardonville and Wisper High-Speed Internet by P&H Services (collectively known as Wisper), its subscribers and the Internet community in general from irresponsible or, in some cases, illegal activities. All Gardonville and Wisper subscribers must adhere to these guidelines. Gardonville and Wisper hope and expect that common sense and good judgment will guide our subscriber's Internet activities.

General Policy

All information transiting the Gardonville and Wisper network is subject to various forms of network management unless it is listed as unacceptable under this policy.

It is the policy of Gardonville and Wisper to provide its subscribers electronic access to the broadest possible number of organizations connected to the Internet. This is accomplished through connectivity to one or more state, regional, or national backbone networks. All information that exists on the Gardonville and Wisper network and traverses the numerous other networks to which Gardonville and Wisper are directly or indirectly connected must conform to the acceptable use policies governing those networks.

Unacceptable Use Policy

It is not acceptable to use Gardonville and Wisper Internet services or facilities for any of the following purposes:

- Any illegal use that violates any applicable laws or regulations
- To disseminate messages or files whose content would likely be highly offensive to the recipient(s)
- Harassment and threats. Using the services to transmit any material (by email, uploading, posting, or otherwise) that harasses or threatens another
- To attempt or make unauthorized entry into any computer systems, information storage, or communication devices or resources
- To propagate computer worms, viruses or transmissions of any type, which disable or otherwise impede or disrupt the recipient's facilities or equipment
- To make distributions of unsolicited bulk email/SPAM
- Using the services to harm, or attempt to harm, minors in any way. Among other uses, use of the services to receive, distribute, solicit, present or in any other way promote child pornography is expressly prohibited. If such activities are occurring and Gardonville or Wisper are aware of such activities Gardonville and Wisper reserve the right to contact the proper authorities
- To cause disruption of services or any other entities service by any means
- To operate your own email, web, FTP and/or gaming server
- Making services available to anyone else
- To violate any part of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 by illegally receiving or distributing any material that is considered copy written. Immediate suspension or termination of services will follow any violation.
- Promoting profanity, nudity, or other adult material

User Responsibilities

- All subscribers of Gardonville and Wisper services are responsible for publicizing this Acceptable Use Policy at their locations.
- All participating affiliates and resellers of Gardonville and Wisper services are responsible for communicating this policy to the appropriate administrative authorities at all user sites connected to theirs via connections not directly support by Gardonville and Wisper Internet services.
- The ultimate responsibility for assuring the acceptability of use according to this policy is with the individual end-user that originates the communication.
- All users are responsible for keeping up to date with this Acceptable Use Policy.
- Users are responsible for maintaining their own virus protection. Viruses are a very real and dangerous threat and it is necessary for an Internet user to have some form of anti-virus protection. It is the user's responsibility to keep their virus protection up to date and the user is responsible for any damage caused by a virus. Gardonville and Wisper are not responsible for any damages that occur to a customer's system due to virus contamination.
- All users are responsible for their own computer system(s) security. Gardonville and Wisper do not provide firewall protection. It is the responsibility of the customer to install the proper firewall protection on their system(s) in order to protect themselves from potential security breaches (i.e. hackers). Because high speed Internet connections are an always-on service and use publicly accessible IP addressing, the risk of someone infiltrating or compromising a computer system(s) is much greater. In no way shall Gardonville and Wisper be held liable for any damages of any kind as the subscriber assumes all inherent risk and full responsibility for the security of the computer system(s). Gardonville and Wisper strongly recommend the installation and proper configuration of a firewall to meet the security needs of the computer system(s).
- All users are responsible, at their own expense, for obtaining, maintaining and operating suitable and fully compatible computer equipment (including a wireless router if it is the user's intent to use the Internet on multiple devices).

Email Policy

In addition to the email terms of use stated in the section titled Unacceptable Use Policy, the following rules and conditions also apply:

- Gardonville and Wisper reserve the right to filter all incoming and outgoing email for potentially destructive content.

- Do not consider Internet email to be a secure means of communication. While no one other than the system administrative personnel (throughout the Internet) would normally have access to email messages, the content of a message is nothing more than plain text in readable form. If more security is required, consider using an encryption program to encrypt messages before sending. The recipient of the email message must decrypt the message using an agreed upon method.
- Do not consider Internet email to be 100% reliable. While there are many safeguards built into the Gardonville and Wisper network, the Internet is not at all infallible. If you must know that a message got through to its intended recipient(s), request the recipient reply to you immediately confirming that they received your message.
- If you choose to use webmail access as your only means of email activities, Gardonville and Wisper will be held harmless in the extreme and rare event of a network failure resulting in lost email messages.

If any of the mentioned conditions are violated there will be a warning, either in writing or verbally, and if there is no compliance, services will be suspended or terminated.

Network Management Transparency Policy

It is the policy of Gardonville and Wisper to remain as transparent as possible through essential network management practices while not blocking lawful content or unreasonably discriminating in transmitting lawful content. Gardonville and Wisper routinely manages traffic on our high-speed Internet network in our fixed wire line, fiber optic and wireless products to minimize congestion and ensure a smooth flow of data. Gardonville and Wisper continue to explore ways to manage occasional congestion on the network.

The following frequently asked questions provide further detail on the network management practices of Gardonville and Wisper:

Why do Gardonville and Wisper need to manage congestion on its network?

Congestion will occasionally occur on any network when many people are using the network at the same time, or they are engaging in activities that use a large amount of bandwidth. Our congestion management is designed to ensure that if congestion reaches a certain level, action is taken so that customers continue to have a good experience. Management of occasional congestion is just one aspect of intelligent network management, which allows Gardonville and Wisper to provide customers the best possible Internet experience. We also manage our network for the safety and security of our customers, by blocking spam and helping to make our customers less susceptible to viruses and other online hazards.

How does this management impact my Internet service with Gardonville and Wisper?

Most likely, you won't notice any effect at all, although we hope management results in a smoother Internet experience. If the network becomes congested, Gardonville's and Wisper's management technology is designed to ensure that all time-sensitive Internet traffic – such as web pages, voice calls, streaming videos and gaming – moves through without delay. Less time-sensitive traffic, such as file uploads, peer-to-peer and Usenet newsgroups may be momentarily slowed. When the congestion is no longer present, all traffic resumes its normal flow.

What types of Internet applications are managed?

Initially, all traffic on the Gardonville and Wisper network will be divided into two categories: time sensitive and non time sensitive. When the network is congested, time sensitive traffic – applications or uses that are naturally intolerant of delay (loading web pages, instant messages, voice calls, email and gaming) – continues as usual. During that period, non time sensitive traffic – applications which are tolerant of some delay – such as file uploads, peer-to-peer and Usenet newsgroups – may be momentarily slowed, but only until the local congestion clears up.

Below is a breakdown of the various time sensitive types of traffic that travel the Gardonville and Wisper network. Any traffic that is not specifically classified will be treated on an individual basis.

Time Sensitive

- Web (Web surfing, including web-based email and chat embedded in web pages)
- VoIP (Voice over IP, telephone calls made over the Internet)
- Email
- IM (Instant messages, including related voice and webcam traffic)
- Streaming (Web-based audio and video programs)
- Games (Online interactive games)
- Tunneling & Remote Connectivity (VPN-type services for telecommuting)
- Other (Any service not categorized into another area)

Non-Time Sensitive

- File Access (Bulk transfers of data such as FTP)
- Network Storage (Bulk transfers of data for storage)
- P2P (Peer to peer protocols)
- Software Updates (Managed updates such as operating system updates)
- Usenet (Newsgroup related)

How do Gardonville and Wisper decide what traffic is time-sensitive and what is non time sensitive?

These classifications are a result of our network engineering expertise and our customers' expectations. Our engineers reviewed the traffic on our network, analyzed the requirements of various services and reviewed available research from third-party organizations. We also took into account our customers' expectations of how these services and applications should perform. For example, customers surfing the Internet expect that web pages should load quickly, so requests for web pages should process rapidly, and therefore fall into the time-sensitive category. However, uploading a file to an FTP site would be minimally affected by a brief delay, so that's classified as non time sensitive.

Will this congestion management technique change over time?

It is possible. We recognize that the Internet is a dynamic medium and it is necessary that we continue to evolve our techniques and policies to ensure a fair, high-quality experience for our customers.

What are some of Gardonville's and Wisper's other network management practices?

Some of our practices are based on traffic prioritization and protocol filtering.

Will Gardonville and Wisper continue to expand its network to handle more traffic?

Yes. These congestion management techniques are not a replacement for upgrades to our network. We will continue to invest in our network infrastructure to ensure there's enough capacity to handle the ever-increasing amount of Internet traffic. But even as we add more capacity on our network, simply adding capacity is not enough. That is why we practice network management.

Congestion can occur occasionally regardless of the maximum capacity of the network, depending on a variety of factors including individual usage or innovative new uses for the Internet. Congestion management can help optimize our customers' experience, while we continue to expand our network to keep pace with bandwidth needs.

Is there a way for me to provide feedback on these network management practices?

Yes. We encourage you to send your feedback via email to gardon@gctel.com.

Modem Usage Policy (Dial-up customers only)

Gardonville dial-up accounts are for attended unmetered interactive usage. Subscribers may stay connected as long as they are actively using the connection. Gardonville expressly prohibits automatically sending packets (pinging) and does not consider this as attended usage. Gardonville will terminate such connections and repeated violations of this policy will result in the termination of the dial-up account. Accordingly, Gardonville maintains the right to terminate any dial-up connection following any extended period of inactivity as determined by Gardonville.

Gardonville dial-up subscribers may not have more than one computer actively connected to a given Internet dial-up account at the same time. Gardonville and Wisper Internet services are not for resale, special circumstances may allow for the resale of services, however prior arrangement and written permission from Gardonville and Wisper are required.

Privacy Policy

It is the responsibility of all subscribers or subscriber organizations to:

- Respect the privacy of other users, and not to seek information pertaining to other users without their explicit permission. This includes but is not limited to personal data, passwords, access to confidential files, or modification of files belonging to other users.
- Use the network service in a manner that is consistent with ethical practice and accepted community standards.

Copyright Policy

It is the responsibility of all individual subscribers or subscriber organizations to respect the legal protection provided by copyright and license to programs, data and other information that may be accessible over the Gardonville and Wisper Network. Gardonville and Wisper reserve the right to monitor the system.

Personal Web Page Policy

All subscribers to Gardonville and Wisper Internet services are allowed, as part of their subscription, storage space for a personal web page. Gardonville and Wisper reserve the right to monitor these pages for content and usage. Any personal web page found to be used for promotional or business advertising purposes will be subject to current monthly storage fees and/or will be removed after a 24-hour notification to the subscriber.

Gardonville and Wisper will be held harmless from liability for personal web pages and any interruption of this service or access to the page. The subscriber is responsible for backups to the site, as well as other elements such as notification and/or maintenance of trademarks, copyrights, etc. Gardonville and Wisper will be held harmless from or any other indirect or direct damages a customer may suffer as a result of a system failure, down time, data loss, interruption or lack of access.

Responsibility

All users of the Gardonville and Wisper network, whether organization or individual, are responsible for publicizing this Acceptable Use Policy at their locations. The ultimate responsibility for assuring the acceptability of use according to this policy is with the individual end-user who originates the communication.

Enforcement

The Gardonville Board of Directors or its designee will review alleged violations of this policy on a case-by-case basis. A violation may result in denying the user access to the network, termination of access to all services and forfeiture of all fees paid. Evidence of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Policy Modifications

Gardonville and Wisper reserve the right to modify this policy at any time. Subscribers may request a copy of the most recent version at any time and it can also be found on the Gardonville website at www.gctel.com.

Information

Questions related to this Acceptable Use Policy should be mailed to Gardonville at 800 Central Ave N, Brandon, MN 56315.