

The AI Data Traffic Light

What never goes into a public AI tool

Employees are already using ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and similar tools at work — usually to save time, not to cause harm. Banning it outright rarely works: people move to their phones and you lose visibility entirely. A one-page rule your team can actually remember works better than a policy nobody reads.

Red — never paste this into a public AI tool

- Client or customer names, contact details, or case-specific facts
- Financial figures not yet public (forecasts, pricing, payroll, M&A)
- Health, biometric, or other special-category personal data
- Credentials, API keys, source code under an NDA
- Anything covered by a client confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement

Amber — check first, use a business (not personal) account

- Draft contracts or policy text with identifying details removed
- Internal meeting notes, once names and figures are stripped
- Marketing copy referencing unreleased products
- Code snippets from your own non-confidential internal tools

Green — generally fine

- Public information (published reports, your own website copy)
- Brainstorming, outlines, and structure with no real data in them
- Grammar, tone, and summarisation of already-public text

The one rule that covers most of it — if you wouldn't paste it into a public forum post, don't paste it into a public AI tool. Free-tier AI tools may use your input to improve their models — assume anything you enter could resurface elsewhere unless the vendor has a written, contractually-binding commitment otherwise.

Three things to do this week

1. **Name one person** who says yes or no to new AI tools — not a committee, one name.
2. **Put this card somewhere the team will actually see it** — pinned in Slack/Teams, not buried in a policy PDF.
3. **Offer one approved alternative** — an enterprise-tier AI account with a written no-training-on-input clause beats a ban every time; people adopt the sanctioned path only when it's at least as fast as the workaround.

This card is deliberately general — the specific privacy law that applies to your business depends on where you operate and where your customers are. Responsible AI Studio's AI Policy Generator turns this into a jurisdiction-specific, board-ready document with named owners and version control → \$39 · one-time · no subscription.

Educational content, not legal advice. Have any policy reviewed by qualified counsel before adoption.