

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY
CITY-WIDE E-MAIL POLICY**

Policy Number: ITPC - 003

Effective Date: 8/21/2008

Purpose and Goals

Email is a critical mechanism for the business communications of the City of Los Angeles. Email is a tool to be used for work-related usage to support the City business functions and therefore must be used with respect and in accordance with the City's goals.

The objectives of this policy are to outline appropriate and inappropriate use of the City's email systems in order to support City business functions to their fullest capacity, as well as comply with applicable policies and laws. This policy also advises employees and management of their responsibilities and provides guidance in managing information communicated by email.

This policy is intended to supplement and not replace any existing policy in effect either city-wide or in any other departments or agencies of the City. Other departments and agencies of the City may have email policies which will take precedence over this policy. Employees should consult with their management to determine whether additional or different email policies apply to their positions.

Scope

This policy applies, as a default policy, to all email systems owned or operated by the City of Los Angeles, and all email account users/holders at the City. This includes full-time staff, part-time staff, contractors, freelancers, and other agents who utilize the City's email system.

Access to Email Services

Email services are provided to all City employees who require email to fulfill their job related duties at the City. It is the responsibility of the department to determine if email service is necessary for each of its employees.

Use of Email

Email services, like other means of City-provided communication, are to be used to support City business. Employees may use email to communicate outside of the City when such communications are related to legitimate City activities and are within their job assignments or responsibilities.

Employees **will not use** email for disruptive, discriminatory, unethical or unprofessional activities, or for personal gain, or for any purpose that would jeopardize the legitimate interests of the City, or violate any City, state or federal law.

Receipt of Inappropriate Email

The distribution, display or forwarding of emails containing non-work related items such as sales offers, jokes, graphics, cartoons, videos, etc., is prohibited, as well any unwelcome and/or inappropriate use of the City's email system to harass or disturb others.

If you receive email that you believe violates this policy, please notify your immediate supervisor for guidance.

Mass Emailing

Mass or bulk emailings are messages sent to a large number of people. The recipients may include City employees, organizations, companies and the general public. Such messages should only be sent in accordance with the applicable department or agency policy. In order to prevent complaints, especially from the public, about receiving unwanted mass email, please abide by the following guidelines when distributing mass emails externally:

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- Inform the recipient what email list they are on.
- In every email sent through the use of a mass email list, include the statement below or a like statement approved by the particular City department or agency which originated the email:

“Thank you for expressing an interest in receiving this email subscription. If you wish to discontinue your subscription, simply reply to this email with the word UNSUBSCRIBE typed in the SUBJECT line. Your name will be removed from the mailing list as soon as your request is processed.”

The GroupWise signature feature can be used to add this text automatically. This text informs the reader that some action on their part has occurred to cause the mailing to be sent, and provides them with a method to remove their email addresses from the list. In addition, a GroupWise rule can be set up to forward all incoming emails with the word “UNSUBSCRIBE” in the subject line to the appropriate staff for immediate attention.

A record of the original request from the recipient to join the email list should be kept, if available.

- To help insure privacy, only BLIND COPY (BC:) mass email to the recipients. This will avoid revealing the recipients' email addresses.

For internal (within the City) distribution of mass email, please abide by the following guidelines:

- Use your email address in the To: field.
- Specify in the subject field or within the email message that your email is being sent to multiple recipients.
- Only BLIND COPY (BC:) mass email to the desired recipients. If a recipient replies and chooses 'Reply to All' rather than the 'Reply' option, the blind copy recipients will not receive the reply. This will avoid unnecessary replies to recipients on the distribution list.

Privacy and Access

In general, the City reserves the right to access all emails created, received or stored on City email systems without prior notification. Therefore, employees should not have an expectation of privacy when using City email.

In addition, employees should not:

- access another user's email without his or her permission, unless authorized;
- send email under another user's name without authorization;

Generally, users should not allow other people to use their email account.

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California Public Records Act and Other Disclosures

Email messages sent, received or stored on the City's email system may be subject to release to the public upon request under the California Public Records Act (CPRA) (California Gov't Code

§6250 *et seq.*). However, certain records, including email messages, may be withheld from release if an applicable exception applies. Employees should consult with the management of their employing agencies and departments, as well as the City Attorney's Office in appropriate cases, to determine whether a particular record should be withheld.

In addition, emails may be subject to disclosure due to litigation or other reasons. Employees should consult with their management for the proper procedures to follow in these situations.

Security

Email security is a joint responsibility of the department or agency's technical staff and email users. Users must take reasonable precautions to prevent the use of their email account by unauthorized individuals. In addition, caution must be exercised to safeguard email passwords and to periodically change passwords to protect against prohibited use. Technical staff should institute sufficient precautions to safeguard the user's confidential information.

Management and Retention of Email Communications

Email is a resource-intensive communications system, and storage space is at a premium. To help conserve City resources, an email resource management policy has been implemented. Under this policy, emails will be automatically removed from the active mailbox after 90 days. If a user needs to retain an email message for a period longer than 90 days, he or she should transfer the email from the email system to an appropriate electronic or other filing system, or simply print the email out. Email that has been deleted (residing in the trash folder) by the user will be permanently deleted after seven days.

Employees should be aware that certain emails should be retained longer than 90 days or even permanently due to a number of reasons including the City's record retention policies, litigation and public records requests, among others. A complete guide to which emails should be retained and for how long is beyond the scope of this policy. Employees should be trained by their departments and agencies in the appropriate record retention guidelines that apply to their particular assignments.

Further Information for Departmental Management on Email Retention

The Los Angeles City Council, on May 18, 2005 (see Council File #05-0633), approved a report instructing all City departments, offices and bureaus to implement an email retention policy in accordance with the following provisions:

1. For disaster recovery purposes, each department and office managing an email system must create and store in a secure location a backup tape of the full email system on a weekly basis and retain the back up tape for a period of 30 days.
2. An email or an attachment to an email that qualifies as a public record pursuant to section 12.1 (i) of the Administrative Code shall be retained in one of two ways:
 - a) The email or email attachment may be printed out and retained in paper format in accordance with the department, office or bureau's Records Retention Schedule.

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- b) The email or email attachment may be retained in an electronic archive if it is categorized and retained in accordance with the department, office or bureau's Records Retention Schedule.

- 3. The department/office having custody of the record to which an email that qualifies as a public record pertains shall have primary responsibility for retaining the email. It would not be necessary to retain an email communication if the official version of the item is produced in paper format.

Thus, department and agency management are encouraged to develop an email records retention policy in accordance with the above principles.

Enforcement/Penalties

Enforcement is a responsibility of the department or agency's technical staff. Users found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Policy Review and Update

The Information Technology Policy Committee (ITPC) will periodically review and update this policy, and submit the updated policies for approval.