

General Expectations of AHS Email Users

AHS uses email to communicate with its employees. AHS and its departments/divisions send employees agency-wide announcements and conduct business using email.

Therefore, staff use of email is subject to the following requirements and expectations:

Requirements:

1. All AHS employees with email accounts are required to check their email regularly when they are on duty and have access to their account.
2. AHS email accounts are limited to 100MB of storage space.
3. AHS email messages are limited to a maximum size of 5MB, which is roughly the equivalent of 1250 pages of text documents, but only a few graphics or pictures. In some instances, the size of one picture may exceed the limit.

Expectations:

1. Employees are expected to comply with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct. A good rule is to communicate only something that could comfortably be made public.
2. Use particular care when using the "Reply" command during email correspondence to ensure that the email is going to its intended recipient.
3. Employees are expected to be considerate and judicious in using email communication. For example:
 - a) Consider whether email is the appropriate method of communication for the message. At times, a phone call, personal visit, or memo may be better.
 - b) Be thoughtful of the audience and direct email to only those parties who truly need to receive it. Before using "Reply to All" consider whether it is necessary to reply to all initial recipients.
 - c) Choose public groups carefully, especially when sending email containing confidential information. Understand the role and composition of a group before sending a message to the group.
 - d) Check carefully to ensure that an email is going to the intended person or group of individuals. It is easy to misdirect email correspondence.
 - e) Be clear and concise, with an identifiable subject line. Keep the message brief. Use attachments for additional information.
 - f) Use email to promote civil and courteous interaction.
 - g) Delete the message thread before replying or forwarding an email if it is not necessary. It can be long and not important to include.
 - h) Only designate an email as high priority or use "urgent" in the subject line when the subject matter truly is urgent.

- i) Do not forward chain letters.
- j) Do not send or forward emails that contain sexist, racially discriminating, or potentially libelous statements, even if they are meant to be a joke.
- k) Do not reply to spam. Delete it from both inbox and trash.
- l) Use “cc” only when necessary. If “cc” is used and the reason for receiving the message would not be clear to the “cc’d” recipient, consider adding an explanation for the purpose of the “cc.”
- m) Use the “Out of Office Assistant” when away from email for more than one work day so people will know not to expect a reply right away.
- n) Avoid all CAPS. It “screams” at the recipient.
- o) Be judicious in use of color fonts and avoid colored backgrounds and wallpaper. The message may be difficult for some people to read, and may not print well.
- p) Ensure that Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) email attachments do not include revision history and comments **when this material might be sensitive or inappropriate for distribution.** The Track-Changes option stores the revision history within the document. In some releases of Office, choosing to Accept All Changes merely hides the revision history, rather than deleting it. Recipients of your email attachment will still be able to determine who made which revisions when. If you are not the sole author of a document, you do not know whether it includes hidden data.

The most comprehensive solution is the Microsoft Remove Hidden Data Tool, found on the File drop-down menu of the Microsoft Office application. If this tool is not installed, if you are uncertain whether your release of Office requires the tool, or if you are unsure how to use it, contact your IT support staff. If you must email the attachment before IT support staff is available, after confirming that there are no visible comments or revision history, you can copy/paste the document contents into the body of the email message.

- q) Be mindful that sharing email from an attorney with others may terminate the attorney/client privilege.
 - r) Be aware that widespread distribution of email may defeat claims of privilege that depend on the confidentiality of the message.
4. When sending an email, employees are representing their department, their agency and their state. This is especially pertinent to remember when employees are sending email outside of state government. The quality and timeliness of an email should receive the same attention as a written letter. This means:
- a) Answer or acknowledge business-related email as soon as possible upon receipt.
 - b) Review spelling, grammar and content prior to sending.