
Electronic Communication

212.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of the Department's electronic mail (e-mail) system by Members of this Department. E-mail is a communication tool available to Members to enhance efficiency in the performance of job duties and is to be used in accordance with generally accepted business practices and current law (e.g., California Public Records Act). Messages transmitted over the e-mail system must only be those that involve official business activities or contain information essential to Members for the accomplishment of business-related tasks and/or communication directly related to the business, administration, or practices of the Department.

212.1.1 E-MAIL USAGE

All Department Members, with Department computer access shall check their Department e-mail daily, while on duty.

All first time users should obtain a logon name and temporary password by their network administrator.

If a Member works in an assignment or location that does not have Department Intranet access, the Member may contact Information Systems to gain access at their location.

Members can also check Department e-mail by using the internet. This is done by going to the following link: <https://webmail.ocsd.org/exchange>.

Members may access their Department e-mail while off duty; however, no Member shall be required to access their Department e-mail while off duty.

212.2 E-MAIL RIGHT OF PRIVACY

All e-mail messages, including attachments, transmitted over the Department computer network are considered Department records and, therefore, are the property of the Department. The Department reserves the right to access, audit, and disclose for whatever reason, all messages, including attachments, transmitted over its e-mail system or placed into its storage.

The e-mail system is not a confidential system since all communications transmitted on, to, or from the system are the property of the Department. Therefore, the e-mail system is not appropriate for confidential communications. If a communication must be private, an alternative method to communicate the message should be used instead of e-mail. Members using the Department's e-mail system shall have no expectation of privacy concerning communications utilizing the system.

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212.3 PROHIBITED USE OF E-MAIL

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive, harassing, or any other inappropriate messages on the e-mail system is prohibited and may result in discipline.

E-mail messages addressed to the entire Department are only to be used for official business related items that are of particular interest to all users and must be approved by the Sheriff or an Assistant Sheriff. Personal advertisements are not acceptable.

It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message under another user's name. Users are strongly encouraged to log off the network when their computer is unattended. This added security measure minimizes the misuse of an individual's e-mail, name, and/or password by others.

212.4 MANAGEMENT OF E-MAIL

Because the e-mail system is not designed for long-term retention of messages (the mailbox size is limited to 99 GB) e-mail that the Member desires to save or that becomes part of an official record should be printed. Users of e-mail are solely responsible for the management of their mailboxes. Any message that is not needed should be deleted.

The following schedule is utilized to store and/or retain e-mail:

1. E-mail shall be kept for 12 months on the Exchange Server.
2. E-mail older than 1 year will be archived and stored for up to 2 years.

212.4.1 E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

The Department considers e-mail an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper e-mail content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image and delivering good customer service. Therefore the Department wishes users to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Writing e-mails:
 - (a) Write well-structured e-mails and use short, descriptive subjects.
 - (b) The Department's e-mail style is informal. This means that sentences can be short and to the point. You can start your e-mail with 'Hi,' or 'Dear,' and the name of the person. Messages can be ended with 'Best Regards.' The use of Internet abbreviations and characters such as smileys, however is not encouraged.
 - (c) Use the spell checker before you send out an e-mail.
 - (d) Do not send unnecessary attachments.
 - (e) Do not write e-mails in all capital letters.
 - (f) Do not use cc: or bcc: fields unless the cc: or bcc: recipient is aware that you will be copying a mail to him/her and knows what action, if any, to take.
 - (g) If you forward mails, state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take.
 - (h) Only send e-mails in which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If they cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider

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rephrasing the e-mail, using other means of communication, or protecting information by using a password.

- (i) Only mark e-mails as important if they really are important.
2. Newsgroups:
 - (a) Users need to request permission from their supervisor before subscribing to a newsletter or newsgroup.

212.4.2 PERSONAL USE

Although the Department's e-mail system is meant for business use, the Department allows the reasonable use of e-mail for personal use if certain guidelines are adhered to:

1. Personal use of e-mail should not interfere with work.
2. Personal e-mails must also adhere to the guidelines in this policy.
3. The forwarding of chain letters, junk mail, jokes, and executables is strictly forbidden.
4. Do not send mass mailings.
5. All messages distributed via the Department's e-mail system, even personal e-mails, are property of the Department.

212.4.3 TEXT MESSAGING

The purpose of this policy is also to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of text messaging by Members of this Department. Because of technical advances and varying manufacturer nomenclature, this policy refers to all Department-issued electronic communication devices and includes all mobile phones, PDAs, and other such wireless two way communication devices.

Text messaging is a communication tool available to Members to enhance efficiency in the performance of job duties and is to be used in accordance with generally accepted business practices and current law. Messages transmitted over a text messaging system must only be those that involve official business activities or contain information essential to Members for the accomplishment of business-related tasks and/or communication directly related to the business, administration, or practices of the Department.

212.4.4 TEXT MESSAGING RIGHT OF PRIVACY

All text messages transmitted on equipment issued by the Department are considered Department records and, therefore, are the property of the Department. The Department reserves the right to access, audit, and disclose for whatever reason, without notice to Members, all messages, including text transmitted on equipment issued by the Department. Therefore, text messages are not appropriate for personal communications. If a communication is personal, an alternative method to communicate the message should be used. There is no reasonable expectation of privacy in the use of Department-issued equipment.

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212.4.5 PROHIBITED USE OF TEXT MESSAGING

Sending or forwarding derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, offensive, racist, sexually suggestive, harassing, or any other inappropriate messages via text message is prohibited and will not be tolerated.