Office Automation Policy, Standards and Guidelines

E-MAIL POLICY

This section describes the electronic mail policy, standards and guidelines for this Agency. All agency staff must abide by the guidelines outlined in the *Electronic Mail Acceptable Use Policy .* The following information outlines standards and guidelines specific to this agency.
The term e-mail is used generically to describe all Groupwise components: E-mail, Schedule, Tasks, Write Note and Phone Messages. This term also encompasses communications sent and received via the Internet.

E-mail is not confidential or private. E-mail messages are considered official CT Department of Labor correspondence. It is subject to Freedom of Information regulations and could be requested and used to support a claim in dispute or a lawsuit. Some e-mail may be subject to confidentiality protection under the law. Information such as tax payments by employers or wages earned by workers should not be sent by e-mail. You may think your e-mail has been deleted and is unrecoverable, but periodic server (post office) backups and/or saved or printed e-mail messages may invalidate that assumption.

The System Administrator, or others, may monitor e-mail to make sure all users are following Agency policy.

Most people find it's easier to be honest and more direct via e-mail than in person. But e-mail is not a substitute for one-on-one, in-person communications. Sensitive communications are best handled verbally. For example, a manager or supervisor should never deliver a performance review, warning about performance, or counseling via e-mail. The manager or supervisor could follow-up the meeting with an e-mail confirming the content of the meeting, but reviews, warnings, or counseling should be delivered in person.

Use the e-mail system for agency business only. Announcements of dinner, parties, etc., to which members of the unit are invited, may be permitted.

Do everything you can to maintain a positive work place. Do not use profanity in e-mail messages. Do not use racial, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise offensive language in e-mail messages.

E-mail can make you more productive (no more playing telephone tag or paper memos). Because it's so easy to use, e-mail can also be used for more trivial purposes. Before sending e-mail be sure that everyone on your cc list really needs a copy of the message.

Don't assume everyone reads their e-mail in a timely manner. If someone hasn't responded to your e-mail, check your outbox to see if the mail was delivered and opened before calling the recipient to find out why they haven't responded. Request a return receipt for time-critical e-mail.
Keep e-mail messages short. If your message exceeds 500 words, make it an attachment. Send attachments in a format that the receiving party can read.

Do not send software as an attachment. If you have a legitimate reason to send software, and it must get there quickly, contact the Help Desk (PC & Network Support Services) at (860) 263-6165.

Delete mail items that you read and no longer need. Mail items that are deleted will reside in your trash for a period of seven (7) days, and then be deleted. If you need to save your e-mail, save it or archive it to your local drive. Depending on server disk space, policies may be invoked to auto-delete e-mail after a reasonable amount of time.

Most users take to e-mail easily. But some hard-core phone-paper users may resist. Try to check your e-mail at least once a day.

- **Passwords**
  In the same way you need a password to log on to a network, it is advised that you set up a password to access e-mail. You can set up your password by choosing the **File** menu from GroupWise choosing the **Preferences** option, then double-clicking on the password choice. Passwords are case sensitive. If you type upper case letters when you choose your password, you must type upper case letters when you enter it.

  - **Choosing a Password**
    Don't use the same password for e-mail that you do to log on to the network. Also don't choose a password that is easy for someone to guess; for example, your spouse's, child's, or pet's name. Avoid using the name of a hobby or catch phrase that someone can easily guess; for example, your nickname. Some users choose passwords by picking a word at random from the dictionary.

  - **Password Security**
    All that stands between you and a coworker reading your mail is your password. Don't write the password down on a yellow sticky note and paste it to your computer, or display it in your cubicle. Also, don't write the password on your computer or under the keyboard. Choose a password that is easy to remember so you don't have to write it down. If you do write your password down, keep it in your purse, wallet or organizer.

  - **Changing your password**
    Always change your password when you think someone has seen it.

  - **Shrouded passwords**
    The system shrouds passwords. In other words, when you type in your password you will either see a series of asterisks or blanks. You have three tries to type the correct password.

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- **Housekeeping**
  You don't have to keep every e-mail message you receive. You can save important information like new staff meeting announcements or project-related messages in different folders—until they are deleted from the system. Delete routine e-mail messages immediately, like a reminder of a staff meeting. When you delete a message from your in-box, it's not really gone. It goes to the "trash barrel." If you want, you can get the message back from the trash as long as the trash hasn't been emptied. The GroupWise system is set up to automatically empty the trash after seven (7) days.

- **Proxies**
  You can designate a proxy who will have access to your e-mail and appointment calendar. Proxies are given when you are out of the office, and you want someone else to check your messages. Proxies can also be given permanently to someone who checks your messages regularly, like a secretary for a manager. You can decide how much access you want your proxy to have. If your proxy has full access to your e-mail and appointment calendar, this individual can perform some housekeeping cleanup for you. The person you give access (proxy) rights to must be in your post office.

- **Your In-Box**
  Keep only new or unread messages in your in-box. Store messages you've read in folders or delete them as soon as you have read them. Your Cost Center Manager or Department Head will give you guidelines about messages that you are required to keep. (also see General Letter 98-1 *Electronic and Voice Mail Management and Retention Guide)*

- **Backups and Archives (Your System)**
  You are responsible for making backup disks for work you have created on your PC.

- **E-mail Usage**
  If you have concerns about someone accessing your PC, only turn on your e-mail when you are using it. If you leave you e-mail up and running, anyone can take a peek in your mailbox and read your mail – and anyone can send a message using your name.

- **Viruses**
  You can't send a virus through standard e-mail text, but an attached executable (program) file, document (MS Word or Spreadsheet MS Excel), may be infected.

- **E-Mail Guidelines**
  No more "Dear Sir or Madame" or "Sincerely Yours." When you choose the recipient and your "CC:" list, the system automatically creates its own To:, From:, Date:, and CC: parts of the message – so you don't need to type this information. Also closings like "Sincerely Yours" are generally not used with e-mail.

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- **E-mail Etiquette**
  Common sense and good manners should be your guide when you are using e-mail. Be polite, diplomatic and professional. Argue about ideas; don't argue with people. It's unprofessional. Be careful with humor. Don't assume the recipient shares your sense of humor. Unless you know the person and his or her sense of humor very well, leave the humor out. The recipient can't hear the tone of your voice or see your face, so it's easy to misinterpret a joke as sarcasm or an insult. (If you inadvertently offend someone, apologize immediately and in-person if possible).

- **Proof and Spell Check**
  Take a minute to use GroupWise's built-in spell checker; then proofread the message. An e-mail message riddled with misspellings or missing words doesn't make a very good impression, If in doubt, don't. If you're thinking, "I probably shouldn't send this," you're probably right. It's easy to address issues via e-mail that you wouldn't on paper or in person.

- **Forwarding Mail**
  Don't send messages that you don't want forwarded. The recipient can easily forward the message to someone who should not be reading it. Do not forward a message that's marked confidential or "for your eyes only". Keep your cool. E-mail tends to make people more blunt (and colorful) than they would normally be on the phone, on paper or in person. When you receive an insulting or confrontational e-mail message, don't respond the same way. Instead e-mail the sender asking for clarification. You can also talk to your System Administrator and ask that the sender be addressed on e-mail etiquette.

- **Wrong mail box**
  If you receive someone else's e-mail, forward it to the correct recipient. It's a courtesy to e-mail the sender (and your System Administrator) to let him/her know the message ended up in the wrong mail box. Chances are the sender simply selected the wrong name from a list, but there may be a wrong address in the server's directory.

- **Organize carefully**
  Just as you can store paper memos in folders in a file cabinet, you can save e-mail messages in electronic folders. You might want to create folders for staff meeting notes, or project-related messages. That way, the messages are out of your in-basket (so you only have to deal with new messages) but are still available so you can reference them.

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SOFTWARE

To prevent computer viruses from being transmitted through the system, there will be no unauthorized downloading of any software. Screensavers, freeware and downloads that have not been approved by IT should be removed from your computer. Utility software such as file viewers, readers and browser updates are available to DOL staff through the Agency's Intranet Site.

The Information Technology Department will load all approved software on DOL personal computers. Any manuals will be left with the user, while original software disks will be maintained by the IT department.

The software disks will be installed on only one machine, unless a license allows otherwise.

- **Copyright Issues**
  Copyrighted materials belonging to entities other than this Agency may not be transmitted by staff members on the Internet. One copy of copyrighted materials may be downloaded or printed for your own personal use in research.

  Users are not permitted to copy, transfer, rename, add or delete information or programs belonging to other users unless given permission to do so by the IT Department. Unauthorized duplication violates federal copyright law and Agency policy. Computer users are responsible for determining that software is legally owned. If you are unsure, contact your supervisor or PC Network Support Services at 263-6165.

  Failure to observe copyright or license agreements may result in disciplinary action by the Agency and/or legal action taken by the copyright owner.

- **Software Anti-Piracy Policy**
  The Agency respects software copyrights and adheres to the terms of software licenses. You may not use software on any agency computer unless it (1) is tagged by facilities, (2) loaded on the PC by IT Department, (3) is used for agency business, and (4) was purchased by the DOL. You may not duplicate software or related documentation for use at work or elsewhere unless the Agency is expressly authorized to do so by agreement with the licensor. The most precise way to avoid violating a copyright is to read the licensing agreement that comes with the software package.

INTERNET CODE OF CONDUCT

Access to the Internet has been provided to staff members for the benefit of the organization and its customers. It allows employees to connect to information resources literally around the world. Every staff member has a responsibility to maintain and enhance the Department of Labor's public image, and to use the Internet in a productive manner. To ensure that all employees are responsible, productive Internet users that are protecting the Agency's public image, the following guidelines have been established for

using the Internet.

- **Acceptable Uses of the Internet**
  Employees accessing the Internet are representing the Department of Labor. All communications are to be of a professional nature. Employees are responsible for seeing that the Internet is used in an effective, ethical and lawful manner. Internet Relay Chat channels may be used to conduct official Agency business, or to gain technical or analytical advise. Databases may be accessed for information as needed. E-mail may be used for state business contacts.

- **Unacceptable Use of the Internet**
  The Internet is not to be used for personal gain or advancement of individual views. Solicitation of non-Agency business, or any use of the Internet for personal gain is strictly prohibited. Use of the Internet must not disrupt the operation of the Agency network or the networks of other users. It must not interfere with your productivity.

COMMUNICATIONS

Each employee is responsible for the content of all text, audio or images that are placed on or sent over the Internet. Fraudulent, harassing or obscene messages are prohibited. All message communications on the Internet are to have your name attached. No messages are to be transmitted under an assumed name. Users may not attempt to obscure the origin of any message. Information published on the Internet must not violate or infringe upon the rights of others. No abusive, profane or offensive language is to be transmitted through the system.

SECURITY

All messages created, sent or retrieved over the Internet are the property of the Agency and should be considered public information. The Agency reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as deemed necessary and appropriate. Internet messages are public communication and are not private. All communications including text and images can be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver.

HARASSMENT

Harassment of any kind is prohibited. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual or group's race, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual preference will be transmitted.

VIOLATIONS

Any violation of these guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. If necessary, the Agency will advise appropriate authorities of any illegal violations.

RETENTION OF E-MAIL AND PUBLIC RECORDS

E-mail messages are retained in accordance with General Letter 98-1, dated June 1, 1998, from the State's Public Records Administrator entitled *Electronic and Voice Mail: A Management and Retention Guide for State and Municipal Government Employees* .