

Business E-mail Etiquette

Sample E-mail Policy

This example policy can be tailored to meet your company's specific needs and requirements. It is highly recommend that each employee review and sign a copy of this document that then is added to their HR/Personnel file. When a new employee comes on board, included this form in your employment package with the other required forms they need to complete and sign so that they are aware of your policies *before* their first day on the job. Simply hi-lite the text, copy and paste into a new document in your word processing program.

Introduction

1. This Policy contains important rules covering e-mail and access to the Internet. Many of the rules apply equally to the Company's other methods of communicating with the outside world such as letter, fax and telephone.
2. This Policy explains how e-mail and Internet access should be used. It explains what you are allowed to do and what you are not allowed to do.
3. The Policy starts with some general rules covering dos and don'ts: We have then identified six areas where legal problems might arise for you and for the Company. These are harassment, defamation, copyright, entering contracts, pornography and confidential information. Under each section there is an explanation of the potential legal problems and some rules to help avoid those problems.
4. Failure to comply with the rules set out in this Policy:
 - a. may result in legal claims against you and the Company; and
 - b. may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including dismissal.
 - c. It is vital that you read this Policy carefully. If there is anything that you do not understand, it is your responsibility to ask your manager to explain in detail. Once you have read and understood this Policy, you must sign it for your company file. Feel free to make yourself a photocopy. Return the signed copy to the Human Resources Department and keep the photocopy for your own reference purposes.

GENERAL

1. The Company e-mail system is primarily for business use. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted provided that this does not interfere with the performance of your duties.
2. All e-mail is stored and the Company may inspect e-mail (including personal e-mail) at any time without notice.
3. If you send a personal e-mail, start or sign off the e-mail with the following statement:

Notice of Personal E-mail: This e-mail is personal. It is not authorized by or sent on behalf of the sender's employer. This e-mail is the personal responsibility of the sender.
4. Ask yourself, before sending any e-mail, how you would feel if your message was read out loud in Court. E-mail messages may have to be disclosed in litigation.
5. Obtain confirmation of receipt for important e-mails sent. If the Return Receipt is not

acknowledged by the recipient and it is important to the Company to know the e-mail was in fact received, it is your responsibility to do a follow up e-mail to get this confirmation.

6. Make and keep hard copies of important e-mails sent and received.
7. Keep all passwords secure.
8. Check your e-mail at least once on each working day or arrange for a duly authorized person to do so on your behalf.
9. Reply promptly to all e-mail messages requiring a reply. Where a prompt detailed response is not possible, send a short e-mail acknowledging receipt and giving an estimate of when a detailed response will/should be sent.
10. Do not impersonate any other person when using e-mail or amend any received messages.
11. Do not import any non-text file, including files received as e-mail attachments, onto your system without first checking them for viruses, using the Company approved software. It is your responsibility to remain virus free and update your virus software each time you log on.
12. Do not create unnecessary e-mail congestion by sending trivial messages, personal messages or by copying e-mails to those who do not need to see them.
13. Do not access the World Wide Web for purposes other than those for which you are employed.
14. Do not deliberately visit, view, or download any material from any Web site containing sexual or illegal material or material which is offensive in any way whatsoever.
15. Do not subscribe to any message boards, newsgroups or any other Internet service of any kind whatsoever without prior written permission from your manager.
16. Do not download software onto the company's system without the prior written permission of your manager. This includes software and shareware available for free on the Internet.

I have read the above Company E-mail Policy and understand that by not following these guidelines I will face disciplinary action and possible termination of employment.

Employee Name (Print Clearly): _____

Employee Name (Signature): _____

Date: _____

The above policy combined with discussion and information (eBook: [Business E-mail Etiquette](#) or paperback [Business Email Etiquette THE MANUAL](#)) can do nothing but protect your company from potential problematic situations — legal or otherwise.