

	Department of Public Safety	
	Standard Operating Guidelines	
	Subject:	Standard Operating Guidelines – Departmental Email
	Section:	Administration
	Guideline Number:	221
	Effective Date:	February 20, 2008
	Review Date:	October 1, 2024
Signature of Approval:	Charles R. Pruitt Director of Public Safety 	

PURPOSE

The widespread use of technology to create, send, or receive messages via the County's e-mail system, the Internet, or other external systems, requires that policies and guidelines be established and distributed to all County personnel so that there is no misunderstanding about the ownership of messages created, sent, received, or stored on the County's systems.

SCOPE

All users should be familiar with and follow the County's policies applicable to these systems. In this regard, the following policies and procedures govern the use of the e-mail system and the access to and disclosure of e-mail messages.

CONTENT

1. The e-mail system is provided by the County to assist in the conduct of County business.
2. DPS staff shall use provided email accounts for all county business.
3. It shall be the responsibility of each DPS employee to check their individual email account twice a shift; within the first 2 hours of being on duty and during the last 2 hours before off duty.
4. The e-mail system is County property, and all messages created, sent, or received on the system or stored on the County's system are and remain the property of the County. They are not the private property of any employee regardless of any such designation either by the sender or the recipient (including designation as "private").
5. The e-mail system is not used to create, to send, to receive, or to store any offensive or disruptive messages.
6. The County maintains the right to review, audit, intercept, access, and disclose all messages created, received, sent or stored over the e-mail system for any purpose. By using e-mail systems, an employee recognizes the County's rights and consents to them. The contents of e-mail so obtained may be disclosed within the County and to third parties without further permission of the employee and at the County's discretion. In certain situations, the County may be compelled to access and disclose to third parties messages sent over its e-mail system.

7. The confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is deleted, it may still be possible to retrieve and read that message. Further, the use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality. The existence of passwords and "message delete" functions do not restrict or eliminate the County's ability or right to access electronic communications.
8. Notwithstanding the County's right to retrieve and read e-mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by individual employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees will not attempt to gain access to messages of another without the latter's permission. All computer passwords and codes are confidential and should only be disclosed to a designated County Information Systems Security Officer.
9. The e-mail system must not be used to send (upload) or receive (download) copyrighted materials, trade secrets, proprietary financial information, or similar materials without proper authorization.
10. Employees may use the County's e-mail system for personal improvement, outside of scheduled hours of work, provided that such use is consistent with professional conduct and is not used for personal financial gain.
11. Employees are not permitted to send mass Department wide emails (publicsafety@co.accomack.va.us) without permission from the Director or his designee.