

## State Agency E-mail Policy Guidelines

Agency e-mail policies should address the issues listed below to complement Archives Division policies on e-mail message management. (In general, see Department of Administrative Services Statewide IT Policy 1.3, Acceptable Use of Information Related Technology.)

- Appropriate use of e-mail systems
- Confidentiality
- Privacy
- Subject line requirements
- Signatures

Agency e-mail policies should incorporate Archives Division policies on e-mail message management as written. (see below, E-mail Message Management)

Agencies should be aware that successful implementation of e-mail policies and attendant procedures require that employees are made aware of their obligations under the policy (training) and that employee compliance should be monitored as stated in the agency policy.

### **E-mail Message Management**

This section addresses the following topics:

- E-mail messages as public records
- E-mail message retention and disposition
- E-mail message filing

In addition, it includes OAR 166-300-0015 (8) 'Correspondence' (Appendix A); the State Archivist's recommendation of Department of Defense (DoD) 5015.2-STD (Appendix B); and information about establishing an electronic file management structure (Appendix C).

#### ***E-mail messages as public records***

When an e-mail message is a public record, it is subject to the Public Records Law (ORS 192), which governs retention of public records and the public's right to inspect public records. The Archives Division establishes retention periods for public records. Each agency is responsible for providing public access to the public records it creates in compliance with the provisions of ORS 192.

In general, any records that document communications created or received by an agency that directly relate to an agency program or agency administration are public records. ORS 192.170 specifies categories of public records that do not need to be retained.

#### ***E-mail message retention and disposition***

The Archives Division establishes retention requirements for public records. These requirements may be found in:

- The State Agency General Records Retention Schedule (OAR 166-300). The retentions specified in OAR 166-300 apply to records that are common to most agencies.

A 'Special' Retention and Disposition Schedule. 'Special' schedules apply to records that are unique to a specific agency. Each agency has a 'special' schedule that has been authorized by the State Archivist.

In most cases, e-mail messages will be covered by OAR 166-300-0015 (8), Correspondence.' Correspondence carries a disposition instruction rather than a set retention. This disposition states:

File with the associated program or administrative records. Retention periods for program records are found in 'Special' schedules; retention periods for administrative records are found in OAR 166-300.

OAR 166-300-0015 (8) 'Correspondence' replaces the following four record categories and their retentions:

- OAR 166-300-0015 (8) Correspondence, Administrative
- OAR 166-300-0015 (9) Correspondence, Ephemeral
- OAR 166-300-0015 (10) Correspondence, General
- OAR 166-300-0025 (17) Correspondence, Fiscal

OAR 166-300-0015 (8) 'Correspondence' applies to records regardless of physical form (paper, electronic) or method of transmittal (U.S. mail, interagency mail, e-mail).

### ***E-mail message filing***

The State Archivist recommends use of an Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) that is certified to be compliant with DoD 5015.2-STD. (Appendix A.) Alternate methods for managing e-mail messages include:

- Printing e-mail messages and filing them with the appropriate records.
- Establishing an electronic file management structure and filing e-mail messages in it.

The filed e-mail message shall be considered the official copy of the record. E-mail system backups are **not** an acceptable means of managing e-mail messages. However, if e-mail messages are retained on system backups, they are liable to legal discovery. Similarly, e-mail messages retained by a user are also liable to legal discovery. In general, agencies should delete other copies of e-mail messages once filed.

## **Appendix A**

### **OAR 166-300-0015 (8) Correspondence**

Records that:

1. document communications created or received by an agency

**AND**

2. directly relate to an agency program or agency administration

**AND**

3. are not otherwise specified in the State Agency General Records Retention Schedule (OAR 166-300) or in state agency special schedules or in ORS 192.170.

Records may include but are not limited to letters, memoranda, notes and electronic messages that communicate formal approvals, directions for action, and information about contracts, purchases, grants, personnel and particular projects or programs.

**Disposition:** File with the associated program or administrative records. Retentions for program records are found in state agency special schedules; retentions for administrative records are typically found in the State Agency General Records Retention Schedule. Communications not meeting the above criteria do not need to be filed and may be retained as needed.

## Appendix B

**To:** Agency Heads  
**From:** Roy Turnbaugh, State Archivist  
**Subject:** DoD 5015.2-STD recommendation

I am recommending that state agencies use DoD 5015.2-STD certified products to manage electronic records.

The Department of Defense (DoD) first issued DoD 5015.2-STD for mandatory use by the Department and its components in November 1997. The revised DoD 5015.2-STD, which incorporates requirements for managing classified records, was released in June 2002.

The use of a DoD 5015.2 certified product can facilitate electronic records management in the following situations:

- managing records from desktop applications where the electronic version of the record will be the official copy.
- maintaining electronic mail in an electronic format for recordkeeping purposes.
- facilitating the transfer of permanent electronic mail records to the Archives Division.
- when automating a business process that necessitates the records to be collected, organized, and categorized to facilitate their retrieval, use, disposition, and preservation.

More information on the DoD 5015.2-STD and certification process are available at <http://jirc.fhu.disa.mil/recmgt/index.html>

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## Appendix C

### Filing System Guidelines

#### *Introduction*

Implementing a filing system within an agency eases retrieval, access and long-term management of agency records. A filing system consists of policies and procedures directing how files should be stored and indexed in order to ensure their retrieval, use and disposition. The same filing system should be in place for both paper and electronic records. It should be simple, logical and easy to implement; otherwise, it will be ineffective. Filing systems within an agency should be based on the agency's records retention schedule. Each agency shall issue further instructions on implementing the filing system.

#### *Inappropriate Methods*

There are a number of possible methods for storing records in electronic format. The State Archivist does not consider the following to be appropriate methods of filing:

Filing documents on a user's personal or local drive, which is not backed up and therefore more susceptible to data loss.

Relying on IT backup tapes for the purpose of meeting records retention requirements.

Filing or storing e-mail messages within the e-mail system that initially sent or received them.

Filing or storing e-mail content in any format that lacks metadata (sender, recipient, date, subject, etc.).

Filing e-mail attachments separately from their associated program records.

#### *What is a filing system?*

A filing system establishes a folder structure for all agency records in one of the following two ways:

##### **Program-based filing**

This type of filing system organizes records based on the organizational structure of the agency. This filing scheme provides easy access to records, but it will change every time the agency undergoes reorganization.

##### **Function-based filing**

All records serve a function or document an activity. This type of filing system organizes agency records based on core functions carried out in the agency, such as financial operations or human resources. Records can serve different functions for various programs, divisions or agencies. For example, an assessment report might serve a project tracking function for one program but serve a budgeting function for another.

#### *Organizing records within the filing system*

Within the filing system, records within each folder need to be organized in a specific manner, depending on how the records are used and retrieved. Below are four main ways of organizing records:

**Alphabetical** – records are organized like a dictionary

**Chronological** – records are organized by date (date of creation, date of project, etc.).

**Numerical** – records are organized by a numbering system (classification code, case number, etc.)

**Alpha-Numeric** – a combination of letters and numbers (i.e. first two letters of a last name and then a sequential number – HE0012)

It is important to remember to keep your filing schemes simple and logical so that they will be used and followed.

### ***Electronic Record Management Systems (ERMS)***

An Electronic Record Management System is a software tool that assists users in filing and retrieving information. It is important to remember that an ERMS will ultimately fail unless records management procedures are in place. An agency-wide records retention schedule, filing system, user training and audit are pre-requisites for successful implementation of an ERMS. An ERMS that is certified compliant with the DOD 5015.2 STD is recommended.

Records should be managed regardless of media (electronic or paper). If an imaging component is part of an ERMS, the scanned images should be managed the same as all other records within the system.

### ***How will the filing system affect employees?***

A consistent filing system may affect the way employees manage agency records, both electronic and paper, but will not drastically affect the way they work. A slight change in thinking about agency records can make a difference in terms of accessibility, retention and disposition.

### ***File Naming Conventions***

Assigning standardized document titles is essential for efficient retrieval of files from computers and filing cabinets. Common naming conventions should be followed for all files and folders on computers as well as for file folders in paper filing systems. The purpose of a file should be identifiable from its title. Below are some things to consider:

A standard way to manage various versions of documents should be stated in agency procedures.

When using a date in the title, use the convention *yyyymmdd* (e.g. 20040820).

When a succession of the same type of document will be in a folder, use an informative first word that will help order them alphabetically.

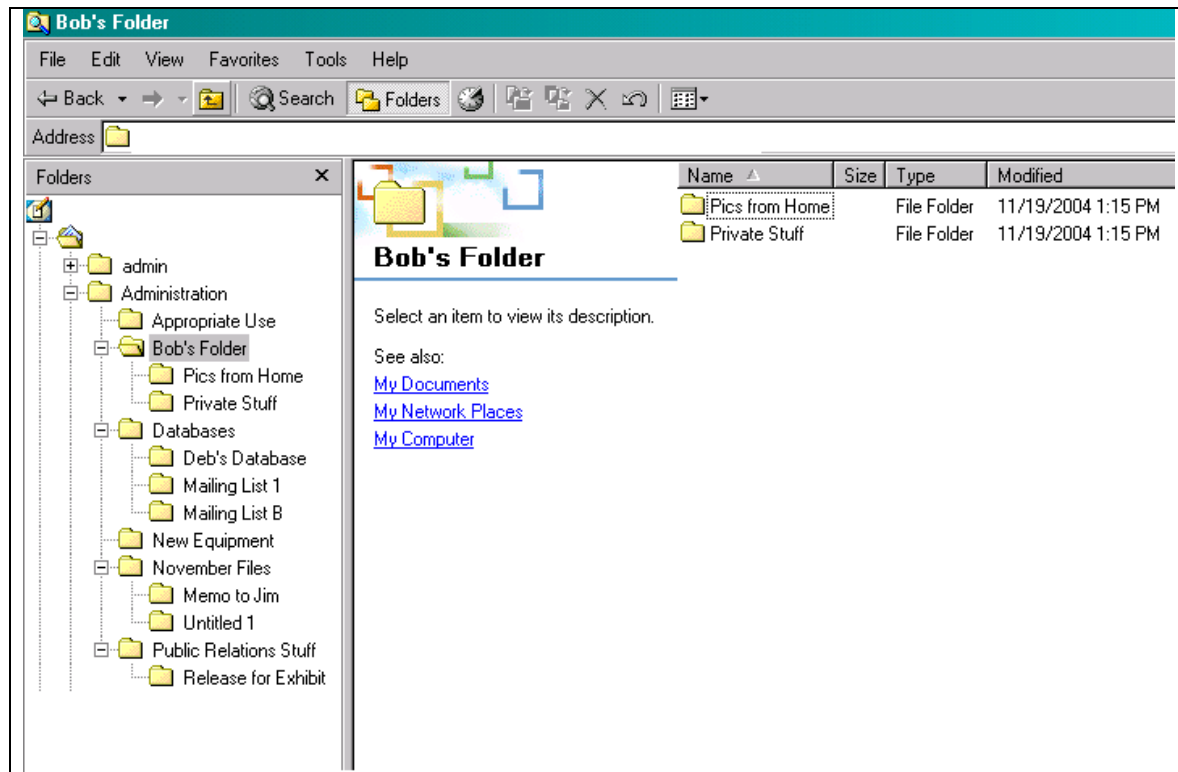
All files should be uniquely named so that there is no confusion between documents. There should be no duplicates, only different versions of a document.

### ***Ensuring Appropriate Use of the Filing System***

Compliance with policies and procedures relating to the filing system should be enforced through the monitoring of disk space usage. Employee compliance with the filing system should be mandatory. Maintaining an organized space to store agency documents, whether it is a filing cabinet or the shared server space, will improve document retrieval and simplify the routine disposal of documents authorized by records retention schedules.

## Examples

Before implementation of a function-based filing system:



## After implementation of a function-based filing system:

