Guidance to Retain E-mail in Compliance with Records Retention Requirements|

This document is intended to provide guidance and reference to the requirements for retaining e-mails in state government.

All e-mails sent or received on government computers and other devices are owned by the State of Indiana or local government and may be public records as defined by the Access to Public Records Act. (See IC 5-14-3-2).   E-mails are not treated differently than any other records; it is the substance (i.e. content) of the e-mail that is the determining factor establishing the document's retention or destruction.

> Reference …
> http://www.in.gov/icpr/files/policyemailandguidelines.pdf

Here are some important things to emphasize:

E-mails can be categorized within three broad categories:

- "Transitory" and duplicate messages, including copies of e-mails sent to several persons, as well as casual routine or personal communications.
- Public records with a less than permanent retention period.
- Public records with a permanent or archival retention period.

Retention guidelines for each of these categories are as follows:

- "Transitory" and Duplicate messages – These are not required to be retained and may be deleted.
- Less than Permanent - Follow retention period for equivalent hard copy records as specified in a retention schedule. The record must be in hard copy or electronic format, which can be retrieved and interpreted for the legal retention period. When there is a doubt about the ability to retrieve an electronic record over the retention period of that record, the record may be printed out. Agencies may delete or destroy such records only after receiving signed approval from the Commission on Public Records via the "Records Destruction Notification" - State Form 00016.
- Permanent or Archival - Retention may be in the form of a hard-copy printout or microfilm that meets 60 IAC 2. The information must be eye readable without interpretation. Questions concerning microfilm should be addressed to the Commission on Public Records, Micrographics Division.

Defining Transitory Records:

"Transitory" messages do not a) set policy, b) establish guidelines or procedures, c) certify a transaction, or d) become a receipt. Transitory documents serve to convey information of temporary importance. The following types of e-mail are considered transitory, and may be deleted unless additional substantive (i.e. non-transitory), information is included in the correspondence:

- Incoming List Serve Messages
- Personal e-mails
- Spam
- Non-policy agency announcements
- Telephone messages
- Published reference materials
- Invitations to meetings and replies.
- "Thank yous"
- Replies to routine questions, "we're open 8 – 5"; "our address is…"; "the deadline is…"
- Out of Office auto-replies

Defining Duplicate Records:

Many e-mails are sent to multiple people within State or local government. Information transmitted in this manner is considered a duplicate record. If retention is required of the original, the sender has the obligation to retain the e-mail in accordance with the appropriate retention schedule.

Examples of e-mail message categories requiring some level of retention include the following:

1. Containing information developed in preparing position papers, reports, and studies;
2. Reflecting official actions taken in the course of conducting agency business;
3. Conveying information on agency programs, policy decisions, and essential transactions;
4. Conveying statements of policy or the rationale for official decisions or actions;

Archiving Your ISBVI Email

In respect to the guidelines above, you can archive your email to save space on the system. Emails sent and received in Outlook (since the conversion from Groupwise) are stored in a system journal automatically, so it is of no consequence except to your convenience to delete those emails from your mailbox (or delete the whole mailbox altogether). However, emails converted from Groupwise to Outlook have NOT been journaled, so you as an individual must archive those emails manually. The archive file you create will contain the messages that you archive from Outlook, it can be accessed from Outlook (as well as searched), and it can ultimately be saved to CD and stored offline (can be opened from the CD in Outlook, should it become necessary to do so).

Outlook Settings:

In Outlook, go to Tools / Options / Other / AutoArchive. You can change only 1 setting, where the archive file is stored. No matter what the setting is currently, you should do the following to change it to the correct location.

- Click on the "Browse" button.
- Under "File Name", type "U:" and press the <Enter> key.
- If there are no errors and the file name changes to something like "archive#.pst", either give it a more meaningful name of your choice and press the "OK" button.
- Click on the "Apply these settings to all folders now" button.

All of your Outlook folders will now be set to automatically archive to the file specified on your U: drive. The U: drive is a specially designated area on the email server set aside to store these files. At the time of this writing, Outlook was set to automatically archive your email folders every 60 days to the specified archive file. It has been set to move items older than 60 months, but that is subject to change depending on system capacity. You can always review the current settings in Outlook, under Tools / Options / Other / AutoArchive, even though you are unable to change the settings. You can also review the Retention Policy Information (this document), by clicking on the respective button at the bottom of the AutoArchive screen in Outlook.

You can specify different AutoArchive settings for each folder by doing following:

- Right-Click on the respective folder
- Click on "Properties"
- Click on the "AutoArchive" tab
- Review the available options and make changes for that folder accordingly to your needs
- Click on the "OK" button.

To open an archive file in Outlook, do the following:

- Click on File / Open / Outlook Data File
- Under "File Name", type "U:" and press the <Enter> key.
- Double-Click on the desired file
- Now look at your Outlook folders, and you should see a new set of folders named "Archive Folders".
- Navigate, search, or perform any action that you would perform on normal folders.

Using the software that you ordinarily use to burn CDs or Windows Explorer to save files to memory sticks, you can always save your email archive to removable media. You simply would set your source file to your archive on the U: drive. You can then delete the file (from the U: drive) to start a new archive. Files on the U: drive are backed up to tape, but beyond a certain age, it is not necessary to keep them anywhere except on removable media in cold storage. However, be aware that until further notice, email destined for cold storage must be labeled and turned into the Education Office to be placed in school archives. This is required above and beyond any extra copies that you retain for yourself.

An additional option to be aware of is the one in which you would create manually an archive, above and beyond the AutoArchive option that offers itself every 60 days: To access it, do the following.

- Click on File / Archive
- Select the desired folder to archive, or select the root "Mailbox"
- Modify the other options according to your preference.
- Particularly select the "Archive File" to be placed on the U: drive.
- Click on the "OK" button.

The archive you create in this manner can be opened and put away on removable, just the same as the automatic archives.

This information is provided by ISBVI IT and has been developed to aid staff in meting the legal requirements for public access to government records. For additional questions contact the ISBVI IT Coordinator.