

Electronic Mail and Department Phones

204.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of the Department's electronic mail (email) system and Department phones by employees of this department.

All employees are issued an email account upon appointment and shall be checked at least once per shift. This includes opening the email account and reviewing each email sent to the employee.

Email is a communication tool available to employees to enhance efficiency in the performance of job duties and is to be used in accordance with generally accepted business practices and current law (e.g., California Public Records Act). Messages transmitted over the email system must only be those that involve official business activities or contain information essential to employees for the accomplishment of business-related tasks and/or communication directly related to the business, administration, or practices of the Department.

All sworn officers and community service officers are issued a phone number and voice mailbox upon appointment. Phone numbers will be printed on Department business cards. Employees with voice mail shall check their voicemail messages at least once per shift. Voicemail can be configured to send voice mail messages to Department email. Employees should not make personal calls outside of the local area.

204.2 EMAIL RIGHT OF PRIVACY

All email messages, including any attachments, that are transmitted over department networks are considered department records and therefore are Department property. The Department reserves the right to access, audit or disclose, for any lawful reason, any message including any attachment that is transmitted over its email system or that is stored on any department system.

The email system is not a confidential system since all communications transmitted on, to or from the system are the property of the Department. Therefore, the email system is not appropriate for confidential communications. If a communication must be private, an alternative method to communicate the message should be used instead of email. Employees using the Department's email system shall have no expectation of privacy concerning communications utilizing the system.

Employees should not use personal accounts to exchange email or other information that is related to the official business of the Department.

204.3 PROHIBITED USE OF EMAIL

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive and harassing or any other inappropriate messages on the email system is prohibited and may result in discipline.

Email messages addressed to the entire department are only to be used for official business related items that are of particular interest to all users. In most cases, personal advertisements are not acceptable.

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It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message under another user's name. Users are strongly encouraged to log off the network when their computer is unattended. This added security measure would minimize the misuse of an individual's email, name and/or password by others.

204.4 EMAIL RECORD MANAGEMENT

Email may, depending upon the individual content, be a public record under the California Public Records Act and must be managed in accordance with the established records retention schedule and in compliance with state law.

The Custodian of Records shall ensure that email messages are retained and recoverable as outlined in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.