



Office of the
Saskatchewan Information
and Privacy Commissioner

OTHER POLICY

3.0 OTHER

3.06 EMAIL MANAGEMENT

Purpose

To ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the management of emails as records.

Application

This policy applies to all authorized users of the IPC email system. It applies no matter where that email takes place: on IPC premises, while travelling for business or while working from home. It applies to the use of IPC email on any device, no matter if owned by the IPC, the employee or a third party.

Policy

The IPC provides an email system to enable effective and efficient communication relating to the business of the office. Emails can be important business records and it is necessary that they are managed in accordance with *The Archives and Public Records Management Act*, which states that records must be retained in a useable and accessible manner until their approved disposal. It is every user's responsibility to manage emails as records.

Official Records vs. Transitory Records

Official Records

An *official record* provides documentary evidence of the business transactions, activities and decisions of the IPC. Official records are required for future business, legal and/or archival purposes. They may be created or received by the IPC and can exist in any media form. It is the content and context of a record that determines whether it is an official record, not its format or storage medium.

Examples of official records:

- Administrative records, such as those related to human resources, finance, office equipment, contracts, corporate policies and procedures.
- Operational records that relate to IPC's core business activities, such as those related to reviews, investigations, consultations or presentations.

Saving Official Records

Official records must be saved and stored securely so that they will be readily available to those who need them and are authorized to access them.

Outlook, the email system currently in use, should not be used for the long-term storage of official records. Many emails are considered official records and must be removed from Outlook and retained and disposed of according to IPC's Retention and Disposition Schedule.

Users should routinely and regularly review emails in their mailbox and save official records to an appropriate file or file system as soon as possible but no later than three months after the received date.

Emails relating to case files must be saved to the corresponding file within DbD.

Non-casework related emails must be saved to an appropriate file within IPC's shared electronic directory.

Transitory Records

A significant number of emails are transitory or temporary in nature and do not merit long-term retention. A *transitory record* has only immediate or short-term value to the IPC. Transitory records are not required for future business, legal or archival purposes.

There are many categories of transitory records. The categories that relate most closely to email are:

- Information of Short-Term Value - records containing information that is either of no importance or value to the IPC, or that is only of immediate or short-term use and has no future value. *Examples:* junk email; announcements of social events such as retirement parties or holiday celebrations; simple messages which are the equivalent of a phone message slip asking a person to contact another person.
- Duplicate Documents - exact reproductions of records where:
 - nothing has been added, changed or deleted;
 - the documents were created and used only for convenience or reference purposes; and
 - the master version of the document has been filed appropriately.

Examples: a finished document sent to all employees; a “cc” copy of a message or document sent to an employee

- Non Work Related Records - records that do not pertain to IPC business; they are sent to the user as an individual, rather than as an IPC employee. *Examples:* emails to or received from family, friends or associations to which an individual belongs. Please note, email is mainly provided for business use, however, limited use for non work related emails is acceptable.

Regularly Delete Transitory Emails

Once transitory emails have served their purpose and are no longer of value, it is important that the emails be disposed of. The greater number of emails that must be managed, the harder it is to locate and retrieve information. It also increases costs and manageability for storage and back-up systems.

For help distinguishing between official records and transitory records, please see the *IPC Guidelines for Policy 3.06 Email Management*.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone with an email account is responsible for managing their mailbox and email messages.

Directors are responsible for supporting their staff’s adherence with this policy.

Group email accounts, such as `webmaster@oipc.sk.ca`, should be assigned an owner who is responsible for managing that mailbox.

Guidelines for Who is Responsible for a Message

Because it is common for multiple copies of an email message to exist, the following are guidelines that establish who is responsible for managing messages in different circumstances.

Sender - Typically, when email messages are exchanged within the IPC, the person who initiated the correspondence is responsible for classifying and filing it. For example, if someone sends an email with a draft of a Report to five people asking them to review and respond with feedback, that individual is responsible for classifying and retaining the initial email and all subsequent messages related to it. The other five people can delete their copies of the emails.

Recipient – In some circumstances, the recipient of the email will be required to classify and file it. When an individual receives an email from outside of the IPC, the recipient is responsible for its classification, as no other copy exists within the IPC. If an email received from within the IPC gives the recipient directions or authorization for an action, the recipient may wish to retain the email as a precautionary measure so that if that individual is questioned they can account for their actions.

Group - In cases where a group of people work together on a project, committee, task force, etc., it is advisable to assign the responsibility for managing all email messages of the group to one individual. Although the rest of the group may need to keep their copies of the messages for the duration of the project, once it is complete their copies are considered transitory records and can be deleted, since they are assured that the official copy of the messages have been classified and retained by the assigned individual. Alternately, the group may decide to set up a shared folder into which all members may file emails related to the project, committee, etc.

Exit Protocols

When an employee is retiring or otherwise leaving the IPC, the employee should ensure the following:

- that all official email records are transferred from their email mailboxes to the appropriate records management system; and
- that all personal emails are deleted before they leave.

These steps should be included in the IPC's checklist for exiting employees.

Note: for more information please see the IPC Guidelines for Policy 3.06 Email Management.

Authority

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, section 43.1
The Archives and Public Records Management Act

Influencing Sources

Guidelines for Managing Emails, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta
Email Management Guidelines, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan