

**Chapter XIII Computer Operations/Management Information Systems****Subject 1 Computer Procedures****1301.01 Objective**

- A. To provide guidelines for the use of computers throughout the Fire Division.

**1301.03 Personal Computer Operations**

- A. All members shall be thoroughly familiar with all sections of the Computer Manual issued to each Company and Bureau. Any time a member is having trouble using a computer program, they should first refer to the Computer Manual.

**1301.05 Electronic Mail (E-Mail)**

- A. All members are required to read their E-mail every on duty day to ensure that messages and schedules are not missed.
- B. Officers will be responsible for checking their E-Mail for new messages at least twice daily. Once in the morning before 0800 hours when coming on-duty and again after 1800 hours to retrieve messages sent during that day.

**Electronic Mail Retention Guideline****A. Purpose**

The purpose of this guideline is to define the responsibilities of City employees for retaining and disposing of electronic mail messages.

**B. Background**

The State of Ohio has established record keeping requirements for local government agencies. Most people now use e-mail as an important and main means of communication. City employees, as senders and receivers of e-mail, have a responsibility to evaluate what may qualify as a public record and how long it should be retained. Employees who act as e-mail administrators, those who manage the hardware and software that processes e-mail, have additional responsibilities for maintaining e-mail databases.

**C. Need for the Guideline**

Employees use e-mail for a wide range of communication. Some of this correspondence is important, but much of it has a very short useful life. Many people can receive a copy of the same e-mail message. Unless someone takes explicit action, an e-mail message is retained indefinitely, regardless of its value.

These factors highlight the need for a guideline that puts the retention of e-mail in perspective, in a way that is consistent with the law. This means saving what is important, but also disposing of items that no longer serve a useful purpose.

**D. Areas of IT Architecture Affected**

Technology Management and Planning

Data Architecture

Common Services Architecture

This guideline follows the Ohio Revised Code dealing with the creation of records. It is neither necessary nor appropriate for public agencies to maintain records that fall outside the scope of this definition:

"The head of each public office shall cause to be made only such records as are necessary for the adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency and for the protection of the legal and financial rights of the state and persons directly affected by the agency's activities." ORC Section 149.40

Retention schedules are based on a record's informational content, not its format. When in doubt, use the same criteria for retaining e-mail as you would if it were a message on paper. Specific guidelines appear below.

Users have the ability to attach other documents to e-mail messages, such as word processing files, spreadsheets and scanned documents. Retain the original documents as you would retain paper records with similar content.

**E. Guidelines for Individual E-mail Users.**

The individual e-mail user is responsible for determining which e-mail messages should be retained. Remove documents as soon as their purpose is served; keep only what you must. The sender of a message has the primary responsibility for its retention. You need not keep messages you receive from other City employees.

Requests for E-mail Records

The official source for e-mail records is the current e-mail database. Use the current e-mail database as the first response to respond to requests for information. Obtain the approval of your department head or other designated authority before responding to requests to provide e-mail records, whether from the public or from someone within the City.

Terminating Employment

When an individual leaves the agency's employment, e-mail records must be left for their successors, and shall not unlawfully be otherwise removed, transferred or destroyed. (Reference ORC Section 149.35~) Employees who are terminating need to follow the guideline in this document. The agency is responsible for reviewing the e-mail records to determine their final disposition, including to whom any of these records should be assigned.

**1) Transitory Messages - Retain until Administrative Purpose is Served:**

Transitory messages are created primarily for informal communication as opposed to the perpetuation or formalization of knowledge. Remove them once they have served their purpose. Transitory messages would include, but not be limited to:

Messages with short-lived or no administrative value, that could have equally been accomplished with voice mail, self-sticking notes or telephone messages.

Routine announcements of seminars or workshops, queries regarding processes or ideas, and general information regarding programs.

Informational files used in the daily administration of business.

Meeting notices, minutes, statistical records and inter-department memoranda that you receive from others.

E-mail that falls into the category of "retain until administrative purpose is served" may be deleted on a daily basis.

**2) Official Correspondence - Retain for One Year:**

Official correspondence refers to e-mail messages that set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction, or become a receipt. Such messages could include correspondence outside the City, as with private citizens or organizations; inter-department memoranda that you originate; and most fiscal and budget records.

E-mail in this category should be retained for one year unless there is a records retention schedule that states otherwise. Individual agencies may, at their option, set longer retention requirements.

If an e-mail message, based on its content, requires a longer retention period, follow the retention requirements for that type of record. Take action to prevent the message from being purged automatically at the end of the standard retention

period. Some options: printing the message, saving the message as a file separate from the e-mail database, or re-sending the message to yourself with a new creation date.

**F. Guidelines for E-mail Administrators**

**1) Backup Files**

The purpose of e-mail backup is for system recovery, not for archiving messages. Backup the e-mail database separately from other system backups. Retain no more than three months of backup media. (See the AWG guideline, Disaster Recovery Backup - Local Area Networks.) Note that backup files may be the subject of a public records request.

**2) Purging E-mail Records**

When an individual leaves City service, take action to secure their e-mail and transfer it to their successor(s), as directed by their supervisor.

**1301.09 User ID's and Passwords**

- A. Because these user ID's and passwords are unique to each individual, they are recognized as an electronic signature admissible in a Court of Law. Any member who allows another member to use his/her User ID or password will be subject to the same disciplinary action as if they had used another member's badge.
- B. Members who forget their password or are unable to sign on should notify their immediate Supervisor. The Supervisor shall send an E-Mail message to "PROBLEMS...CFD" requesting that the member's Password be reset. Members will then be guided by the procedures in the Computer Manual.

**1301.11 General Rules**

- A. All information shall be entered into the system in a timely and accurate manner.
- B. District Chiefs shall assist in verifying that all required reports are submitted in a timely manner.
- C. Members shall not alter, delete or otherwise tamper with any systems files on the individual work stations.
- D. Members shall strictly obey the chain of command when conducting official departmental business over the electronic mail message system (e-mail).
- E. Officers or acting officers shall validate all reports received from subordinates.
- F. Members shall not change or amend a completed report of another employee unless authorized by the Fire Chief to do so.
- G. Members shall not reproduce, copy or otherwise replicate any application software or its documentation.

- H. Members shall not connect any devices, which are not authorized by the Fire Division, to any work station computer or any of its peripherals.
- I. Members shall not distribute hard copy and soft copy output to anyone who is not a member of the Fire Division without approval from the Fire Chief to receive such materials.
- J. All company officers shall update and maintain the company's electronic calendar.
- K. All computers shall be left on continuously unless otherwise directed by the Fire Chief or his representative.
- L. All members shall protect the computer work station from environmental factors which may cause problems with its proper operation (i.e. extreme temperatures, direct sunlight, magnetic fields, moisture, debris, etc.).
- M. Members shall not perform any maintenance except normal cleaning. All cleaning shall be done with supplies which are provided by the Fire Division for that purpose.
- N. All members shall immediately report, to the proper authority, any condition or malfunction which requires service.