

E-mail Retention Guidelines

1. What are the retention requirements for E-Mail?

E-mail communications relating to municipal business are part of the Municipality's records and shall be retained depending upon the nature of the document, consistent with the retention requirements for that type of document. E-mail may include public records or transitory information. Only those e-mail classified as public records in the Public Records Act, or the Municipality's adopted records retention schedules, must be retained based on established retention periods published therein. The content of e-mail may vary considerably; therefore, each e-mail shall be evaluated to determine if it meets the definition of a public record.

2. Which E-mail constitute public records?

E-mail and attachments identified as public records shall be retained and stored for as long as required under the appropriate retention period provided in the Municipality's adopted records retention schedules. E-mail that are public records include but are not limited to:

- A. Policies and directives;
- B. Correspondence or memoranda that contain final directives, determinations, instructions or guidance regarding public business;
- C. Minutes of the Governing Body or Boards and Commissions, advisory groups, ad-hoc committees or work groups developing programs;
- D. Messages that authorize, establish or complete a business transaction; or
- E. Final reports or recommendations such as to the Governing Body or Boards and Commissions or produced by task forces or study groups.

3. Which E-mail are NOT public records?

Non-record and transitory e-mail do not set policy, provide directives, establish guidelines or procedures nor do they certify transactions; they may be destroyed at the discretion of the user. Non-record and transitory e-mail include but are not limited to:

- A. Duplicate copies of messages sent to multiple people;
- B. Personal messages and announcements not related to official City business;
- C. Preliminary drafts of letters, reports and memoranda;
- D. Messages considered brainstorming or preliminary thought processes in nature, reflecting the exchange of ideas preliminary to the development of a final decision or position of the City;
- E. Transmittal e-mail that do not add substantive information to the attachment(s) being transmitted;
- F. Copies of documents distributed for convenience or reference;
- G. Announcements of social events, such as retirement parties;
- H. Spam (unsolicited, commercial E-mail); and
- I. Messages to or from E-mail distributions lists (listserv) not directly related to City business.

4. Other Considerations

- A. E-mail should be filed in a manner that enhances accessibility and assists in records management and retention.
- B. The attachment an e-mail contains falls under records management, not the e-mail which transmits it unless the body of the email adds substantive information to the attachment.