

## City of Delaware Email Etiquette and Use Policy

This policy provides the City of Delaware (“City”) employees with effective, consistent standards in regards to the use of the electronic mail systems (email) provided by the City.

1. **Scope.** This policy applies to all the employees of the City of Delaware at all facilities.
2. **Policy Statement.** All electronic communications and stored information transmitted, received, or archived in the City’s information system are the property of the City. The City reserves the right to access and disclosed all messages sent by email. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with respect to any email coming into or going out of City resources, particularly those which come into, or go out of, a City email account. City email accounts are provided in order to carry out communications for City or City-related business only. Following are guidelines in using the system:
  - a. Email to a vendor, client, or the public should follow the same formality as a business letter. It should be treated as a formal document with proper business standards being followed. Spelling, grammar and punctuation should be checked.
  - b. Follow the chain of command. Do not copy or jump management levels unless absolutely appropriate.
  - c. Use professional language. Never send abusive, harassing, threatening or ethical oriented messages, even in jest.
  - d. Use common sense about what you say or send. You cannot control who will ultimately read it. Confidentiality is a misnomer and privacy does not exist. A good rule of thumb is “never write anything to email that you would not want to become public knowledge.”
  - e. Review your message before you send it. A sentence that might be clear to someone talking to you face to face might come across quite differently without the tone of your voice or the facial expressions.
  - f. Think before you send email to more than one person. Respect other employees’ time. Do the additional people really need or want to see the message? Often an obligation is felt to respond or we want to express our own opinion. This then turns into a “chat” session.
  - g. Limit the size of your message where possible.
    - i. For internal email, make use of hyperlinks to files on the shared network drives rather than attaching the file to the email. This practice commonly ends up creating multiple copies of the same file, sometimes at several layers. This is not necessary. Create a hyperlink to the file—the user will still be able to access the file.
    - ii. For external email, it may be necessary to compress the file prior to sending it.
  - h. Broadcast email. Use Broadcast email features appropriately:
    - i. Use Broadcast email for City business only. This means that you should not be selling anything, soliciting contributions on behalf of charities, nor any other non-City-related activity.
    - ii. Use proper resources for notifications. For example, if you are going to be out of the office, use the “Out of Office Assistant” in Outlook, and voicemail options to let people know you are going to be out of the office. There is no need to send a broadcast email to everyone in the City when you are going to be out of the office.
  - i. Practice good housekeeping rules. Storage space on the computer is critical:

- i. Create folders for received and sent messages. Use folders to save important information but make it a regular habit to review all folders and delete old or out-dated material. Delete unimportant messages as you read them.
  - ii. Keep your “in” and “sent” boxes clean. We recommend that all employees purge their files every 60 days. Refer to your records retention schedule when purging documents. Only one copy needs to be retained, whether electronic or paper.
  - iii. Do not save multiple copies of threads. When you send a message and get a response with your original message attached, you begin to have several layers. You only need to save the last one. Do not reply with attachments or use “reply all” unless the response requires it.
  - iv. Use professional courtesy and business etiquette:
    - (1) Always use a short informative subject line. This gives the receiver some indication of the importance of the message.
    - (2) Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without the personal interaction, your joke could be viewed as criticism.
    - (3) Do not type in all caps and keep paragraphs short and concise. Sign your messages.
    - (4) Generally focus on one subject per message.
3. **Violations.** Violations of any guidelines listed above may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. If necessary the City will advise appropriate legal officials of any illegal violations.
4. **Administration.** This policy will be administered through the Department of Administrative Services.