

## County of Monterey Electronic Mail

### Deletion, Retention, Storage and Backup Policy

#### I. Purpose

In July 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted the County Records Management Policy, providing for consistent standards of responsible recordkeeping across all County Departments.<sup>1</sup> The County Records Management Policy provides that electronic communications (e-mail) is intended to be a medium of communication, not records storage; that routine e-mail messages are non-records, not intended to be retained in the ordinary course of County business; that each e-mail user is responsible for removing such non-records from the County's e-mail systems; and that upon removal, such e-mails will be routinely destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

This policy implements the County Records Management Policy, as it pertains to e-mail, with a County-wide procedure governing retention, storage, deletion and backup of County e-mail messages and associated attachments. It will allow the County to manage e-mail messages and attachments efficiently and cost effectively, consistent with applicable retention policies, legal requirements, and industry best practices.

#### II. Summary

- This policy will be phased-in over a period of two (2) years.
- After phase-in, e-mail messages will be retained and backed-up for one (1) year from the date they were sent or received
- After phase-in, e-mail messages older than one (1) year from the date they were sent or received will be, with specified exceptions, permanently deleted.
- The technical function of archiving e-mail by creation of Outlook Personal Storage Table (PST) files will be disabled ninety (90) days after the Board of Supervisors adopts this policy.
- PST files will be permanently deleted from County e-mail systems on July 1, 2020.
- The County e-mail system is not to be used to store messages or documents of lasting value.
- E-mail and associated attachments of lasting value that require retention for a period greater than one (1) year shall be electronically stored using the County document management software implemented for this purpose.
- E-mail and associated attachments of lasting value that require retention for a period greater than one (1) year shall be retained in accordance with a Board-approved Records Retention Schedule, and as required by applicable statutory, regulatory, or other legal retention periods.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.in.co.monterey.ca.us/iss/policies/Records-Management-Policy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> County Records Management Policy, Section D.12. E-mail Policy, pp.13-14.

### III. Applicability

This policy applies to e-mail messages and associated attachments maintained in the County e-mail system by all County officers and employees, including County consultants, contractors and other individuals who maintain a County e-mail address (e-mail users).

### IV. Responsibility

Deletion and retention of e-mail and associated attachments in accordance with this policy is the responsibility of each e-mail user. Department heads shall oversee implementation of this policy to ensure compliance.

### V. Deletion

As provided in the County Records Management Policy, the County e-mail system is a communication tool, not a storage mechanism or filing system. To ensure that the County can provide a technically viable, highly available e-mail system for the conduct of County business, the following deletion procedure is established:

#### E-mail Messages/Attachments

- A. On July 1, 2018, e-mail messages and associated attachments older than one (1) year from the day they were sent or received will be deleted. To implement this portion of the policy, the County e-mail system will be configured to automatically delete messages older than one (1) year.
- B. E-mail users shall continuously review e-mail messages and associated attachments to determine if they have lasting value, as established by Departmental Records Retention Schedules (e-mail of lasting value).
- C. E-mail users shall immediately delete e-mail messages and associated attachments that have no lasting value.
- D. E-mail users shall electronically store e-mail of lasting value using the County document management software implemented for this purpose, as provided by Section VI of this policy.

#### Archived E-mail Messages/Attachments (PST Files)

- E. On July 1, 2020, e-mail messages and associated attachments archived in PST files will be deleted. To implement this portion of the policy, County systems will be configured to automatically locate and delete PST files county-wide on July 1, 2020.
- F. E-mail users shall review the contents of e-mail messages and associated documents archived in PST files to determine if they have lasting value, as established by Departmental Records Retention Schedules.
- G. E-mail users shall delete e-mail messages and associated attachments archived in PST files that have no lasting value.
- H. E-mail users shall move e-mail of lasting value that is archived in PST files to the County document management software implemented for this purpose, as provided by Section VI of this policy.

## **VI. Retention/Storage**

Effective July 1, 2018, e-mail messages and associated attachments will be retained in the County's e-mail system for one (1) year.

To ensure that e-mail and associated attachments comply with records retention schedules approved by the Board of Supervisors and other legal requirements, e-mail users shall implement the following, with oversight by Department Heads:

- A. E-mail messages and associated attachments of lasting value that are required by law, County policy, or contract to be retained longer than one (1) year shall be electronically stored, using the County document management software implemented for this purpose, or another electronic document management system as authorized by the Director of IT. Such e-mail messages and attachments shall be classified by record types established by applicable Departmental Records Retention Schedules to ensure that they are retained for the appropriate period of time, and shall be deleted or destroyed when the designated retention period has passed.
- B. E-mail users shall review e-mail messages and associated attachments that are archived in their individual PST files. Archived e-mail messages and associated attachments of lasting value that are required by law, County policy, or contract to be retained longer than one (1) year shall be electronically stored, using the County document management software implemented for this purpose, or another electronic document management system as authorized by the Director of IT. Such archived e-mail messages and attachments shall be classified by record types established by applicable Departmental Records Retention Schedules to ensure that they are retained for the appropriate period of time, and shall be deleted or destroyed when the designated retention period has passed.

## **VII. E-mail System Back-up:**

County back-up systems are operated for disaster recovery purposes, not for record retention purposes. As of July 1, 2018, e-mail messages and associated attachments will be backed up for one (1) year.

## **VIII. Exceptions: Legal Proceedings/Investigations**

Where litigation is pending or threatened, notwithstanding other retention requirements, e-mail and associated attachments that pertain to threatened or actual legal proceedings shall be retained until the litigation is concluded, as directed by County Counsel.

Other exceptions to this procedure may be authorized by the County Administrative Officer, after review and approval of the proposed exception by the County of Monterey Information Technology Governance Committee.

## **IX. Unauthorized E-mail Storage**

No e-mail user may retain or store e-mail messages and associated attachments related to County business by forwarding such e-mail to personal e-mail accounts, by downloading e-

mail to public internet storage (e.g., Dropbox and similar), by transferring e-mail to personal devices (e.g., by USB stick to personal laptops and home computers), or by any other method. Such unauthorized e-mail retention and storage violates this policy and County data security policies. Such unauthorized e-mail retention and storage is cause for employment discipline, including termination, and is cause for contract termination.

## X. Policy Phase-In

### Phase-in Year One

- A. From July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017, e-mail users shall review their e-mail messages and associated attachments and assess whether they have lasting value, as described in this policy and pertinent Departmental Records Retention Schedules.
- B. E-mail users shall either delete e-mail, or shall move e-mail older than two (2) years which needs to be retained for business purposes, to the County document management software implemented for this purpose.
- C. County e-mail systems will be configured to automatically delete messages in County e-mail mailboxes older than two (2) years on July, 1, 2017. Thus, as of July 1, 2017, e-mail messages dated June 30, 2015 and older will be deleted

### Phase-in Year Two

- D. From July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, e-mail users shall review their e-mails and associated attachments and assess whether they have lasting value, as described in this policy and pertinent Departmental Records Retention Schedules.
- E. E-mail users shall either delete e-mail, or move e-mail older than one (1) year which needs to be retained for business purposes, to the County document management software implemented for this purpose.
- F. County e-mail systems will be configured to automatically delete messages in County e-mail mailboxes older than one (1) year on July, 1, 2018. Thus, as of July 1, 2018, e-mail messages dated June 30, 2017 and older will be deleted.

### Phase-in—E-mail Archived in PST Files:

- G. From July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020, e-mail users shall review e-mail messages and associated attachments archived in their individual PST files and shall assess whether they have lasting value, as described in this policy and pertinent Departmental Records Retention Schedules.
- H. E-mail users shall either delete archived e-mail, or move archived e-mail which needs to be retained for business purposes, to the County document management software implemented for this purpose.
- I. County e-mail systems will be configured to automatically delete PST files on July 1, 2020. Thus, as of July 1, 2020, no archived e-mail in PST files will exist.