

Electronic Mail

212.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of the Department electronic e-mail system by employees of this Department. E-mail is a communication tool available to employees to enhance efficiency in the performance of job duties and is to be used in accordance with generally accepted business practices and current law. Messages transmitted over the e-mail system must only be those that involve official business activities or contain information essential to employees for the accomplishment of business-related tasks and/or communication directly related to the business, administration, or practices of the Department.

All electronic communications shall also be in compliance with the City of Vancouver (COV) Policies regarding the use of computers, E-mails, internet and other technological resources.

212.2 E-MAIL RIGHT OF PRIVACY

All e-mail messages, including any attachments, that are transmitted over Department networks are considered Department records and therefore are the property of the Department. The Department reserves the right to access, audit or disclose, for any lawful reason, any message, including any attachment, that is transmitted over its e-mail system or that is stored on any Department system.

Employees using the Department e-mail system shall have no expectation of privacy concerning communications transmitted over the system.

E-mail messages between an attorney and client where advice is either received or given falls under the Attorney/Client Privileged Communications and is guarded as a confidential communication. In the event this email is subject to a public disclosure request, the privileged communication will be redacted. To clarify that the e-mail may have confidential information, the subject line of the e-mail should indicate words to the effect this email contains Attorney/Client Privileged Communication.

Employees should not use personal accounts to exchange e-mail or other information that is related to the official business of the Department.

212.3 USE OF E-MAIL

Communications which represent personal advertisements, opinions etc. that have not been cleared through the Chain of Command should not be sent through the VPD-group email system.

Sending any derogatory, patently false, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive, harassing or any other inappropriate messages through the email system is a violation of this policy.

Email messages addressed to the entire Department, i.e., VPD-All, are only to be used for official business related communications that are law enforcement related and of general applicability to all users such as C-briefs, overtime postings, "Can You ID Me", etc.

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212.4 MANAGEMENT OF E-MAIL

Because the e-mail system is not designed for long-term retention of messages, e-mail that the employee desires to save or that becomes part of an official record should be printed and/or stored in another database. Users of e-mail are solely responsible for the management of their mailboxes. Messages will be archived pursuant City policy, procedures and applicable law.

E-mail messages are public records when they are created or received in the transaction of public business and retained as evidence of official policies, actions, decisions, or transactions as required by applicable City policy or law.

212.5 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

With the necessity to respond to administrative and external communications, all VPD employees shall log into their VPD e-mail account to review and acknowledge any e-mails in a timely manner (e.g., next working day).