

Sample Email Usage Policy Document

This policy applies to **all** employees when using the electronic mail (or the intranet) in "COMPANY NAME" and on behalf of "COMPANY NAME"

Every employee has a responsibility to maintain the company's image, to use these electronic resources in a productive manner and to avoid placing the company at risk of legal liability based on their use.

Use of email:

All messages distributed via the company's email system, even personal emails, are "COMPANY NAME" property. You must have no expectation of privacy in anything that you create, store, send or receive on the company's email system

Your emails can be monitored without prior notification if "COMPANY NAME" deems this necessary. If there is evidence that you are not adhering to the guidelines set out in this policy, the company reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including termination and/or legal action

Email is a business communication tool and users are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same laws apply. Therefore, it is important that users are aware of the legal risks of email:

1. An email message may go to persons other than the intended recipient. If it contains confidential or commercially sensitive this could be damaging to "COMPANY NAME"
2. Letters, files and other documents attached to emails may belong to others. By forwarding this information, without permission from the sender, to another recipient you may be liable for copyright infringement.
3. Email is a fast form of communication. Often messages are written and sent simultaneously, without the opportunity to check for accuracy. If you send emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks, you and "COMPANY NAME" can be held liable
4. An email message may legally bind "COMPANY NAME" contractually in certain instances without the proper authority being obtained internally.
5. Email messages can carry computer viruses. If you send an attachment that contains a virus, you and "COMPANY NAME" can be held liable. By opening emails and attachments from an unknown sender you may introduce a virus into "COMPANY NAME" computer operations generally.
6. All personal data contained in emails may be accessible under Data Protection legislation and, furthermore, a substantial portion of emails to Government and other public bodies may be accessible under Freedom of Information legislation. Email should always be regarded as potentially public information, which carry a heightened risk of legal liability for the sender, the recipient and the organizations for which they work.

Rules for email use:

"COMPANY NAME" considers email as an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper email content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image and delivering good customer service. Users should take the same care in drafting an email as they would for any other communication. Therefore "COMPANY NAME" wishes users to adhere to the following rules

1. "COMPANY NAME" name is included in the heading carried with every message sent by a "COMPANY NAME" member. Emails reflect on "COMPANY NAME" image and reputation. Therefore, email messages must be appropriate and professional.
2. It is strictly forbidden to use "COMPANY NAME" email system for anything other than legitimate business purposes. Therefore, the sending of personal emails, chain letters, junk mail, and jokes is prohibited. All messages distributed via the company's email system are "COMPANY NAME" property.
3. All emails will carry a disclaimer stating that the email is intended only for "COMPANY NAME" use and if used for any other purpose a named person should be contacted immediately within "COMPANY NAME".
4. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential or commercially sensitive information. If in doubt, please consult your manager.
5. Company confidential messages should be distributed to personnel only. Forwarding to locations outside is prohibited.
6. Great care must be taken when attaching documents or files to an email. Letters, files and other documents attached to emails may belong to others. By forwarding this information, without permission from the sender, to another recipient you may be liable for copyright infringement. Again, if in doubt, please consult your manager.
7. Only send emails of which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If emails cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider rephrasing them, using other means of communication, or protecting information by using a password
8. Subscription to electronic services or other contracts on behalf of "COMPANY NAME" is prohibited unless you have the express authority from an authorized member of staff to do so.
9. If you receive any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating messages via email or intranet you are requested to inform your Manager or the IT Personnel immediately. It is important that we trace such emails as quickly as possible.

10. A hard copy of any important or potentially contentious communication which you have received via email should be printed and filed appropriately (e.g. confirmation of order, etc.). Where important to do so you should obtain confirmation that the recipient has received your email.
11. Documents prepared by "COMPANY NAME" for customers may be attached via the email however information received from a customer may not be issued without prior consent of the original sender. If in doubt consult your Manager.
12. Users must spell check all mails prior to transmission
13. "COMPANY NAME" reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose all messages created, received or sent over the electronic mail system for any purpose. All computer pass codes must be provided to (managers/supervisor/named position). No pass code may be used that is unknown to the company.

Notwithstanding the company's right to retrieve and read any electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any email messages that are not sent to them. Any exception to this policy must receive prior approval from your manager. However, the confidentiality of any message should not be assumed. Even when a message is erased it is still possible to retrieve and read that message. If any breach of our email policy is observed then disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken.

By signing on the line below, I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to comply with the foregoing Email Use Policy. I understand that, if I do not comply with the Email Use Policy, I may be subject to discipline, including loss of access to "COMPANY NAME" facilities. I may also be subject to legal action for damages or indemnification.

Signature_____

Date_____