

Archiving Emails – A 12 Point Guide for Denominational Offices & Churches

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1. Emails are official business records (see #4) and so need to be subject to overall archiving policy (#2,5). (NB Need to emulate *mutatis mutandis* traditional archival guidelines which apply to traditional paper archiving of correspondence.)
2. Need for an organisation-wide policy on creating and archiving emails (with regular review) – including defining of official emails, retention, creation, identifying, archiving, access (*see more below*)
3. Need regular staff training on the meaning of the official organisational policy, as well as on procedures for creating, handling and archiving emails.
4. A Business email is any email that contains information relating to the business of the organisation (communication of information/business activities, reports/records, organisational administration, historical information etc) and is created or received by an employee in the course of their duties; such emails and the information they contain are the property of the organisation and are therefore to be preserved according to its current archival and other policies. (see also #12)
5. Emails need to be archived properly (ie, with efficient management, access and tracking) not just stored within the email client or backed-up at either PC level or server level (eg **Outlook archiving either auto or manual to PST; or saving messages individually) so Electronic Record Management application is needed (ie, mail archiving program*) to preserve according to retention policies, managing, providing access, and ensuring authenticity and integrity. (*eg Mailstore, MailArchiva, Enkive, ArchiveMail, Mailbase – some of which capture emails in/out automatically and save to non-PST format. **Saving within Outlook retains the PST format and also does not allow for access from other users.)
6. If no better facilities are available, it will be necessary to decide on importance of each email message, and manually archive and/or print business critical emails on good quality paper for normal archiving along with other documents related to the subject matter in question. (Note: use Outlook “rules” to assist)
7. The creator/sender and receiver both need to take proactive responsibility for archiving of emails
8. Need to distinguish types of emails:
 - o Business critical vs business routine
 - o business vs ephemeral vs personal
 - o business emails vs promotional/informational/circular emails vs non-business
9. Need to have policy on retention/disposal and access – eg not all emails need to be kept for ever, but some do (ie, business critical); they need to be readily accessible to relevant people under official policy.
10. Need to control any auto-deleting or purging operations by sender/receiver, other staff, or IT department
11. Creation of emails:-
 - a) Meta-data: need to specify sender and receiver, date and subject/s and other critical detail
 - b) Subjects need to be clear and sufficient to fully identify emails as to business category and topic
 - c) Ideally, only one subject per email - to simplify archiving, save space and avoid clutter
 - d) No excessive cc and bcc emails created – ditto
 - e) Threads to be kept to minimum - ditto
 - f) Attachments need identifying as above and to be captured along with email
12. Staff leaving the organisation and/or transferring between departments/roles need to be de-briefed to ensure all emails are accounted for under policy, especially when personal email addresses are used rather than organisational ones.