

Email Frequently Asked Questions

Is email a record?

Yes, email is a record. Messages that document substantive City functions, provide evidence of City business transactions, or are needed to provide information on actions related to City projects and activities are government records and must be retained and managed in compliance with the City's recordkeeping requirements.

What email should be retained?

Emails that document substantive City business need to be retained according to the retention period associated with the function the email documents.

Substantive email will:

- Document a City function
- Provide evidence of City business transactions
- Provide information on actions related to City projects and activities
- Document legal or audit issues

What messages do **NOT** need to be retained?

The types of messages that do **not** need to be retained, and can be deleted as soon as they are no longer needed include:

- Routine or non-policy messages
- Mass or broadcast email messages
- Transitory memos or correspondence
- Lunch appointments, jokes, personal messages etc.

Can I delete spam or transitory email?

Yes, messages that are completely unsolicited can be deleted immediately! It is best that you delete this type of email as soon as it is no longer needed instead of allowing the system to purge it at 90 days because it clutters your inbox, and makes it more difficult to manage the email you need.

Isn't my email private and not subject to public disclosure?

People often treat email communications more like a conversation than correspondence. You should always assume that what you write in email is going to be seen by someone whom you may not want to see it (the newspaper, your boss, etc.). Email messages may contain information that is subject to audit, public disclosure requests, and legal processes such as discovery and subpoena.

Isn't the retention policy on my email 90 days?

The 90 day policy on the email in your inbox and sent items is an auto-delete policy. Email retention is based on the content of the email, not the format. You must move your messages into the policy/retention folders deployed to you so that the Email Archiving system will collect it.

How long can I view messages in the policy/retention folders?

Messages are viewable in the policy/retention folders for 2.5 years. Emails in the folders are collected by ZyLAB and kept for the retention period associated with the folder.

What are these policy/retention folders?

The policy/retention folders are assigned according to your department or division's functions and the retention periods for the records that document those operations.

Can I re-name the policy/retention folders?

No, do **NOT** rename the folders. ZyLAB has rules associated with the policy/retention folder names and if you rename the folders your messages will not be retained properly. The CRMP recommends you create sub-folders with the names of projects, issues, or terms that you specifically need.

Can I save my email in other formats?

The City Records Management Program (CRMP) does not recommend saving email messages into other formats as it changes the integrity of the record. The email archiving system will retain email in its native format. However, if you are concerned with ensuring the retention policy can be met or if several individuals need access to the email, you may save an email as an "msg" on a shared directory for multiple people access the messages.

I am leaving City employment, what should I do with all my email?

ZyLAB will continue to hold your email until its retention period has been met regardless of your employment status with the City.

Who can I ask if I have additional email questions regarding retention and management issues?

The City Records Management Program can help you determine which retention periods apply to your email, develop plans to organize email, identify email preservation strategies, and provide training on a variety of email management topics. Contact the CRMP at 684-8154 for assistance.