

POLICY 311 E-MAIL RETENTION

1. **Purpose.** To establish a consistent procedure for retention of email.
2. Responsibility for E-mail Retention.
 - 2.1 E-mail itself is not a public record that must be retained. The content of an e-mail determines if it constitutes a public record that must be retained.
 - 2.2 Employees are responsible for retaining e-mail that constitutes a public record pursuant to the County Records Retention Policy, Chapter 2.90 of the County Code.
 - 2.3 Since May 1, 2013, all county e-mail has been archived in a searchable database. Archived e-mail will be retained for a period of three (3) years.
 - 2.4 E-mail that is a public record that otherwise would be retained for a period less than the archive period of three (3) years does not have to be separately retained by employees.
 - 2.4.1 Correspondence e-mail – e-mail that is equivalent to correspondence must be retained for three (3) years as specified in Chapter 2.90.010R of the County Code. Since the retention requirement is met by the archive period, it does not need to be separately retained.
3. E-mail That Does Not Constitute a Public Record.
 - 3.1 Junk e-mail – similar to junk mail, including spam.
 - 3.2 Conversational e-mail – similar to having phone conversations.
 - 3.3 Drafts – drafts, notes, preliminary computations and light materials prepared for the originator’s personal use or prepared by the originator in the name of a person for whom the originator is working.
 - 3.4 Personal property – materials prepared for the originator’s personal use with no relation to his or her office.
 - 3.5 Copyright – materials to which access is limited by copyright, patent or bequest.
 - 3.6 Computer records – computer programs or trade secrets.
 - 3.7 Published materials – published materials are excluded if they are available for inspection at a public library or are available for sale.

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3.8 Copies – copies of documents received by a public agency from another agency purely for informational purposes and concerning matters not affecting functions of the recipient agency.

4. Method of Retention.

4.1 E-mails that constitute public records should be saved electronically directly from the e-mail system and retained pursuant to the Records Retention Schedule of the County Code, Chapter 2.90. This method retains the content of e-mail as well as the metadata and all attachments.

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