



**DOUGLAS COUNTY**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

<b>TITLE</b> Use of Electronic Mail	<b>Approval Date</b> 5/6/97
<b>POLICY CUSTODIAN</b> Information Technology	<b>Revision Date</b> 6/21/00

**PURPOSE:** To clarify that electronic mail may be considered public records and to ensure appropriate employee conduct regarding use of electronic mail systems.

**DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** Information Technology

**DEPARTMENT(S) AFFECTED:** All

**POLICY:**

*Definition*

Electronic mail ("e-mail") is defined as any message that is transmitted electronically between two or more computers or terminals, whether stored digitally or converted to hard (paper) copy. Under part 2 of article 72 of title 24, C.R.S., e-mail messages are considered public records and may be subject to public inspection, pursuant to §24-72-203, C.R.S. All computer-related information, including e-mail messages, are the property of Douglas County and are considered the County's records.

*Employee Access*

When an employee is assigned a network login, he or she will also receive an e-mail account. This account may be used to send and receive e-mail messages to/from other county employees and to/from external e-mail accounts. Conduct for the use of these e-mail systems is detailed below.

*Employee Conduct*

As with any county property or equipment, e-mail should be used for official county business only. Incidental and occasional personal use of e-mail is permitted. However, strictly forbidden e-mail usage includes use for personal profit or gain; transmission of political messages; solicitation of funds for political or other purposes; or sending of harassing messages.

### *Monitoring*

Because e-mail is county property, the County has the right to inspect and review any e-mail or other data stored on county computers/equipment. Information Technology staff is responsible for monitoring electronic mail through regular computer/network maintenance. Additionally, County officials may inspect and copy e-mail and computer records when there are indications of impropriety by an employee, when substantive information must be located and no other means are readily available, or when necessary for conducting county business. Supervisors may review the contents of an employee's electronic mail without the employee's consent.

An employee in violation of this policy may have his/her e-mail privileges revoked.

### *Retention/Archiving/Destruction*

E-mail messages that concern policies, decision-making, specific case files, contracts or other information that should be kept as part of the official record of county business should be retained in accordance with the County's records management policy and transferred to the appropriate business system or storage medium by the recipients of such e-mail. Only after a copy of the record has been so archived should a recipient delete the item from their personal mailbox.

The Chief Information Officer is the official custodian of electronically/digitally stored information, including electronic mail. Information Technology is responsible for monitoring and retrieving archived data/information. Users (employees) are responsible for archiving e-mail messages.

### *Public Requests*

Public requests for electronic mail that is a public record should follow the procedures in the *Requests for Public Records Procedure Policy*. Public requests for public records will be handled in compliance with the Public Records Act.

Members of the public who request public electronic mail records will be charged for the costs of providing those records, in accordance with the *Requests for Public Records Procedure*.