

Policy

It is the policy of the association that the (association) email address (and usage thereof) is the private and official address for electronic correspondence between (association) staff members and from the (association) staff to the association membership and professional affiliate organizations of association. To further this electronic relationship between association staff and membership, all such electronic communications shall reflect a high standard of professionalism in terms of subject matter, content, grammatical usage, style and format.

The work products of association staff, whether in the form of email, paperwork, computer files, member telephone or facsimile calls, belong to the association. All of this work is subject to review, whether it is stored electronically or on paper.

In conformance with this policy, the email system shall not be utilized to communicate personal and private messages to family members or friends or staff on non-AOBA business, except under the most exigent of circumstances.

Further, the email system shall not be utilized routinely by staff to transmit to members, or to the family and friends of staff, any general business or personal information not directly related to the professional interests of our trade association, including such information as may be gleaned from the internet or through email received by staff from friends or family. Access to the email system shall not be granted to the family members of staff.

Finally, the staff shall not utilize the email system to post pyramid or chain letters, jokes, solicitations, offers to buy or sell goods, internet commentary not directly related to official association business interests, partisan political opinion, and personal social or economic commentary.

Association staff members, of course, do retain their constitutional rights to fully exercise their personal political, social, economic, and other views via their own personal email addresses or at other private or public internet sites.

There follow a number of "guidelines" and "etiquette" practices for implementing this email policy:

Guidelines

1. Association staff shall not send or retransmit email messages that:
 - a. could damage the reputation or image of the association in the eyes of our members, those organizations with whom we do business, or the general public.
 - b. are intended to or reasonably interpreted intended to harass or threaten the recipient.
 - c. defame any person or company.
 - d. disclose any privileged or confidential information of the association, our member organizations, or entrusted to the association by organizations with whom we do business.
 - e. attempt to hide their identity or represent the sender as someone else.
2. When exigent personal circumstances do necessitate that a staff member communicate via the email system to family or friends do not include in any such list of addressees the email addresses of staff or members; keep the personal and private, personal and private.
3. Never send any message transmitting material you may have received from the internet or from any other uncertain source unless you are absolutely certain that the information is accurate and reliable; research and confirm before, not after posting. If any item in a message is inaccurate, the message, by definition, is inaccurate.

4. Be careful when addressing mail; there are addresses that may go to a group although the address appears to involve just one person.
5. Be brief but not overly terse:
 - a. when sending a message requesting the addressee to provide certain data, make certain that the initial message contains all the information needed for the addressee(s) to fully meet your expectations. Multiple messages regarding the same request serve only to frustrate or confuse all parties.
 - b. when replying to a message, include only enough material to be understood.
6. Remember: email is highly susceptible to forgery and spoofing of various degrees of detection; apply a commonsense reality check before assuming that a message is valid.
7. The association email address is not secure; never put anything in an email message that you would not put on a post card or would not like to see on the front page of The Washington Post.
8. Recipients of email can forward your email without your knowledge or approval.
9. Your email may be subject to legal access and disclosure.
10. The contents of forwarded email can be changed from the original.
11. Think twice before you click on the "send" button.

Etiquette Tips*

1. Be concise and to the point.
2. Always include a pertinent and meaningful subject title for the message.
3. Get to the point immediately.
4. Provide all the necessary information to get the desired detailed response.
5. Answer all questions and preempt further questions.
6. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.
7. Make it personal.
8. Use templates for frequently used inquiries or responses.
9. Answer swiftly.
10. Do not attach unnecessary files.
11. Do not attach a file if you can paste the information into the body of the email.
12. Use proper structure and layout.
13. Do not overuse the high priority option.
14. Do not leave out the message thread.
15. Add disclaimers to your email.
16. Read the outgoing message before you send it.
17. Do not overuse "Reply to All".
18. Take care with abbreviations and emoticons.
19. Be careful with formatting.
20. Take care with rich text and HTML messages.
21. Do not forward chain letters, virus warnings, petitions for "good causes", etc.
22. Do not request delivery and read receipts.
23. Do not ask to recall a message.
24. Do not copy a message or attachment without permission.
25. Do not use email to discuss confidential information.

26. Do not write in all CAPITAL letters.
27. Use active instead of passive verbs.
28. Avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT.
29. Avoid long or convoluted sentences.
30. Do not send or forward emails containing any language that could be considered to be libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene.
31. Keep your language gender neutral.
32. Do not reply to or transmit Spam.

*Source: emailreplies.com