

**CITY OF SANGER
ELECTRONIC MAIL RECORDS RETENTION
AND DESTRUCTION POLICY**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide City staff to appropriately and effectively use electronic mail or email. Email communication is an integral part of the City's business and with technology rapidly changing this policy does not address every situation. The purpose of the policy is to set forth general principles for the use of email.

E-mail messages are the property of the City, thus, they are subject to the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act (subject to disclosure) and the laws applicable to the State Records Retention Schedules adopted by the City. A complete e-mail message not only includes the contents of the communication, but also any metadata retained by the City's email system, and any attachments.

The City desires to adopt a policy for that purpose and to prescribe guidelines and procedures for the management of e-mail consistent with the Electronic Records Standards and Procedures and in the interest of cost-effective recordkeeping, including long-term records retention for the Archives of the State of Texas.

II. SCOPE

This policy covers email systems used by the City in terms of record retention and storage. Records are created and received in both paper and electronic formats. Management of paper and electronic records must be coordinated and controlled to reduce liability, avoid gaps in documentation, eliminate inconsistencies, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

It is the City's policy to provide for efficient retention and disposition of email communications. The goal is for effective email management and to ensure compliance with laws concerning the creation, retention, and access to public records regarding email. It is important to note that, as with other correspondence, the content of the electronic mail message determines the retention requirement. There is no set retention schedule that encompasses all electronic mail.

E-mail accounts are provided to employees for conducting public business. Therefore, employees should have no expectation of privacy when using the City's computer resources. Authorized individuals within the City may monitor equipment, systems and electronic message traffic at any time for security and maintenance purposes and reserve the right to audit networks and systems on a periodic basis to ensure policy compliance.

Applications affected include the City's e-mail program any applications used and stored on network servers. This policy also applies to each application used to create e-mail, including word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, financial and accounting software, and any customized software applications used within the City where electronic documents are stored and whether such storage space is shared or personal.

III. DEFINITIONS

Information created or received by the City is a local government record if it meets the definition in the Local Government Records Act:

Local Government Record means any document, paper, letter, book, map, photograph, sound or video recording, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic medium, or other information recording medium, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted under the laws of the state, created or received by a local government or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law, including an ordinance, or in the transaction of public business.

This definition does not include extra identical copies of documents created only for the convenience of reference or research by employees.

Three types of records commonly written in email transactions relate to the following record series: General Correspondence, Routine Correspondence and Administrative Correspondence.

1. General Correspondence – means incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence pertaining to the regular operation of the policies, programs, services, or projects of a local government. May also include subject files, which are collections of correspondence, memos and printed materials on various individuals, activities, and topics. ***Records Retention GR1000-26b: 2 years***

2. Routine Correspondence – means correspondence and internal memoranda such as letters of transmittal, requests for publications, internal meeting notices, and similar routine matters. May also include subject files, which are collections of correspondence, memos and printed materials on various individuals, activities, and topics. ***Records Retention GR1000-26c: Administratively Valuable.*** Administratively Valuable means a record should be retained as long as the record is valuable to the employee in their daily use. This type of record shall be deleted when the record is no longer useful to the employee. A destruction request is not required for these records.

3. Administrative Correspondence - means incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence pertaining to the formulation, planning, implementation, modification, or redefinition of the programs, services, or projects of a local government and the administrative regulations, policies, and procedures that govern them. May also include subject files, which are collections of correspondence, memos and printed materials on various individuals, activities, and topics. ***Records Retention GR1000-26a: Four (4) years.***

This type of record should be deleted when it meets the retention period. A destruction request is required for these records.

IV. EMAIL RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

The use of electronic media such as email and other forms of electronically stored information (ESI) has replaced paper as the predominant method to capture and store information for most departments.

Due to the volume of email correspondence sent and received it is unrealistic and inefficient to expect employees to make individual decisions regarding the retention requirements of each email. As a result, the City establishes that as of the date this policy is signed, all City E-mail correspondence will be kept in the E-mail Archive System for a period of four (4) years.

- The Four (4) year retention period refers to the email header, message text and includes all attachments.
- If an e-mail must be kept longer than four years, then the e-mail must be printed and added to an appropriate paper file, or printed and scanned into the City's Laserfiche system in the appropriate location.
 - It is the email originator's or initial City recipient's responsibility to ensure that these documents are moved from the email system to electronic storage (*i.e. Laserfiche with the construction project, property address, financial records, personnel file, or etc.*) for the required retention period if longer than the four (4) year period. **Note:** Enforcement of the above email retention periods is based solely on the date the email first entered the system.

Reiterating, it is the content of the E-mail that determines the required retention period. Email will be retained in the Archive according to the established four (4) year retention period.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

This policy applies to all employees, Council members, and other board members who are permitted to use the City's electronic mail system and shared files for sent and received emails.

Electronic documents meeting the legal definition of a Local Government record are subject to all records management requirements set forth in the City's Records Retention Program for sent and received emails. For messages received from outside the City, the receiver should maintain the official record according to the retention period for that record series.

VI. MAINTENANCE AND RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Local Government records created using an email system will be stored in accordance with the guidelines established by documents as amended from time to time by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

VII. DISPOSITION

Local Government records may be destroyed with the approval of the Records Committee and City Secretary pursuant to the State and City regulations governing records retention.

Security measures should be taken to protect email records from unauthorized alterations or deletions. Convenience copies should **not** be kept longer than the record copies or kept in a personal email account or portable disk drive. Backup of email is for security purposes and disaster recovery purposes only. Backup systems are retained and managed by the City's third-party Information Technology vendor.

Email accounts of separated employees will be retained on the server by the Information Technology vendor for four (4) years in accordance with established retention guidelines.

Destruction of local government records that violate the provisions of the Local Government Records Act is a Class A misdemeanor. Anyone destroying local government records without authorization may also be subject to criminal penalties and fines under the Public Information Act.

Records created using the City's e-mail system must be saved for their approved retention period by printing the message and filing it in the appropriate paper file or by scanning the e-mail into the City's Laserfiche system. The Records Management Officer is responsible for training new employees to ensure compliance with the City's approved retention control schedules.

This policy is effective from and after its date of adoption by resolution. **E-mails older than four (4) years will need to be deleted within six (6) months from the adoption of the policy.**

APPROVED:

John Noblitt, City Manager

Date