

Electronic Mail

138.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of the electronic mail (email) system provided by the Cook County Sheriff's Office. Email is a communication tool available to members to enhance efficiency in the performance of job duties and is to be used in accordance with generally accepted business practices and current law (e.g., Illinois Freedom of Information Act). Messages transmitted over the email system must only be those that involve official business activities or contain information essential to members for the accomplishment of business-related tasks and/or communication directly related to the business, administration, or practices of the Sheriff's Office.

138.1.1 ISSUANCE/EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy was re-issued on Oct. 1, 2019 and shall become effective upon issuance (operational updates).

138.2 EMAIL RIGHT OF PRIVACY

All email messages (including any attachments) that are transmitted over Sheriff's Office networks or are used to conduct Sheriff's Office business are considered Sheriff's Office records and therefore are Sheriff's Office property. The Sheriff's Office reserves the right to access, audit or disclose, for any lawful reason, any message (including any attachment) that is transmitted over its email system, or that is stored on any Sheriff's Office system.

Members using the Sheriff's Office email system shall have no expectation of privacy concerning communications transmitted over the system. The Sheriff's Office reserves the right to suspend, disable, or terminate a member's email access or certain email functions for any reason.

Members should not use personal accounts to exchange email or other information that is related to the official business of the Sheriff's Office, as such actions may subject said accounts to disclosure or discovery.

138.3 PROHIBITED USE OF EMAIL

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive, harassing, non-work-related or any other inappropriate messages on the email system is prohibited, will not be tolerated and may result in discipline. Additionally, the Sheriff's Office may:

- (a) Restrict or terminate a member's email access for any reason; or
- (b) Restrict a member from sending emails to a particular individual or group.

Email messages addressed to the entire Sheriff's Office are only to be used for official business related items that are of particular interest to all users. Personal advertisements are not acceptable. It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message under another user's name. Users are responsible for all messages sent under their unique user identifications and therefore are strongly encouraged to log off the network when their computers are unattended. This added

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security measure should minimize the misuse of an individual's email, name and/or password by others.

Use of Sheriff's Office electronic communication for political activity is prohibited.

138.4 EMAIL RECORD MANAGEMENT

Sheriff's Office email shall be retained as follows:

- (a) All Sheriff's Office members are required by law to preserve all public records.
- (b) Sheriff's Office emails that must be retained under the Illinois Local Records Act include those written or obtained by Sheriff's Office members pursuant to law; or in connection with the transaction of public business that are important to the understanding of the organization, function, policies, decisions, procedures, or other activities of the Sheriff's Office; or because of the informational data contained therein.
- (c) Sheriff's Office email messages created within the course of business, having been prepared by or for, or having been used by, received by, in the possession of, or under the control of any public body may be subject to an Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Any information included in the messages may be subject to FOIA requests and shall be retained, including but not limited to, records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, papers, maps, photographs, recordings, electronic data processing records, electronic communications and recorded information pertaining to the transaction of public business.
- (d) Sheriff's Office email messages that include personnel records or include personnel information related to employment decisions and/or actions may be subject to the Personnel Record Review Act.

Email may, depending upon the individual content, be a public record under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and must be managed in accordance with the established records retention schedule and in compliance with state law.

The Sheriff's Office shall ensure that email messages are retained and recoverable as outlined in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

138.5 ACCESS TO EMAIL

Sheriff's Office members with assigned email accounts should log in to their email accounts at least once per shift, or more often as may be dictated by job/assignment requirements. Any assigned email account that has had no login activity for a period of 70 consecutive days will be disabled and can only be reactivated by the Sheriff's Office Bureau of Information and Technology Help Desk.

138.6 REQUIRED INFORMATION

Email subject lines should relate to the body of the message. When the content of an email changes, the subject line should reflect the change.

Email signatures should only contain the following information:

- Name and rank/title

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- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Department
- Facility/unit of assignment
- Telephone number (e.g., office or desk number)
- Optionally, Sheriff's Office-assigned mobile number
- Optionally, Cook County Sheriff's website address

The use of photos, images, quotes, and additional information other than the above is prohibited.

When an email is sent from a generic account (e.g., an account belonging to an entire unit or department), a signature line should be included indicating who prepared the email or specific contact information.