

Village of Mount Prospect

Email and Document Retention Policy

Section 1: Purpose. To establish email management and document retention guidelines to guide employees in the retention of email messages and other documents considered to be public records and the routine deletion of all other emails.

Section 2: General.

Email. Email is a tool to facilitate daily communications of a temporary or short-lived nature and the Village email system is not to be utilized for the purpose of retaining or preserving any information or documentation. However, each employee has an obligation under the Local Records Act to preserve email messages necessary to comply with this law and to delete any non-essential emails on a routine basis, in order to better preserve the capacity and functionality of the system.

Other Electronic or Paper Documents. File server storage and physical storage are provided for Village documents such as memos, letters, spreadsheets, books, maps, tapes, photographs, etc. However, each employee has an obligation under the Local Records Act to preserve record documents and to delete non-essential documents on a routine basis, in order to better preserve the capacity and functionality of the system.

Section 3: Definition of Terms.

Application for Authority to Dispose of Local Records. Official document providing the schedule that establishes when the disposal of records may occur after the minimum retention period listed for each record series is met, provided no litigation is pending or anticipated and providing all audit requirements (local, state, and federal) have been met.

Document Management System. A system that has been created in order to preserve final and official documents of the Village, to provide a single search feature to locate these documents, to eliminate the chance of preliminary documents being issued within the organization or to the general public, to reduce the amount of paper utilized to share information, and to ensure compliance with the records retention requirements.

Email Archiving System. A system that has been created to capture all email that is sent through the Village email system. Emails will be retained according to the requirements of the Local Records Act for general correspondence. Record emails requiring longer term retention periods must be managed outside of this system.

Emails will be set for deletion as shown below:

- General email is considered Administrative Correspondence, which will be retained for a minimum of two years before an application will be made for deletion.
- Email for employees holding the positions of Village Manager and Assistant

Village Manager will be retained for 7 years before an application will be made for deletion.

- **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).** The statute that provides the public with the right to access government documents and the public body must provide those records, unless there is an exemption that protects those records from disclosure.

Local Records Act (50 ILCS 205/1 et seq). The statute that establishes the efficient and economical management of local records to promote economy and efficiency in the day-by-day recordkeeping activities of local governments and to facilitate and expedite governmental operations.

Junk Email. Any emails that are unwanted solicitations and have no informational value, including SPAM.

Public Body. A legislative, statutory, or advisory committee or subcommittee of the Village.

Public Record. All records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, maps, photographs, microfilms, cards, tapes, recordings, electronic data processing records, electronic communications, recorded information and all other documentary materials pertaining to the transaction of public business, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared by or for, or having been or being used by, received by, in the possession of, or under the control of the Village. Public records have been categorized into the following:

- *Administrative Value* — Records policies, functions, organization, and significant administrative decisions.
Retention: Permanent
- *Legal Value* — Records related to actual or pending litigation or government investigation or containing evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations of the Village such as legal decisions and opinions; fiscal documents representing agreements, such as leases, titles and contracts; and records of action in particular cases, such as claim papers and legal dockets.
Retention:
 - o Litigation: Three (3) years after closure of case. Village may want to retain permanently.
 - o Legal Opinion: Permanent
 - o Contracts/Leases/Agreements: Ten (10) years after expiration.
- *Fiscal Value* — (Financial Transactions) Records that account for the expenditure of funds.
Retention: Seven (7) years
- *Historical, Research, or Archival Value* — Records containing basic facts about the Village's origin, having enduring value because they reflect significant

historical events or document the history and development of the Village.
Retention: Permanent

Records Disposal Certificate. A form that is filed with and approved by the Illinois State Archives Local Records Unit before any public records may be destroyed.

Records Retention Schedule. The schedule established through the Application for Authority to Dispose of Local Records and details when the disposal of records is allowed and a Records Disposal Certificate should be filed.

Section 4: Guidelines for Managing Retention and Disposal of Emails.

Each email user must carefully screen and evaluate email message for content. It is the content of the email and not the type of media on which it is stored that determines how long it must be retained. Each email sent or received should be reviewed for compliance with the records retention schedule.

Emails that the user feels qualify as public records must be saved by the owner or custodian (keeper) of that email and preserved in accordance with the approved records retention schedule. In general, an employee is the owner of (a) all business emails sent, and (b) business emails received if that employee is one of the primary recipients of the email or is the only one receiving the email within the Village.

When an employee is simply copied on an email sent to another employee, that employee is not the owner of that email, and is not generally required to retain the email. Exceptions may exist in connection with litigation or other legal disputes, where an employee should comply with any legal instructions to retain records even if that employee is not the owner of the email.

A) Email of a Personal Nature and Junk Emails. Emails not related to Village business should be deleted immediately.

B) Email of a Short-term or Temporary (Transitory) Value. Emails having short-term usefulness should be disposed of once that use has expired. These emails would not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, and have any historic value. This includes documents attached to email messages as well as to the messages themselves. Examples include:

1. Correspondence encountered in the daily administration of a department, including acknowledgements, courtesy correspondence, declined invitations, meeting announcements, scheduling changes.
2. Documents scheduling meetings, travel, appointments and events, including calendars and related lists and postings unless they relate to activities of executives or persons in policy-making positions.
3. Out-of-office replies and thank-you messages.
4. Communications regarding routine office practices and procedures, such as handling mail, opening hours, storm or emergency coverage.
5. Duplicate messages/attachments: an email that is a copy of an original email with the same message content and attachments is a duplicate that may be

deleted; an email in a multiple mail "thread," where participants have responded to each other several times with the previous messages included need not be kept as long as a later message in the same thread is retained.

6. Replies to routine questions and information requests – for example, address and hours open, requests for forms.
7. Incoming listserv messages.
8. Media advisories, news and press releases and web announcements sent for informational purposes unless the employee is involved in the drafting or review of these documents.
9. Reports, meeting minutes and publications that are distributed by you for your convenience as a member of a group or committee and are not needed to support other files. If the group has a secretary or record keeper maintaining copies, you do not need to keep an additional copy.

C) Email of Long-term Value. Emails possessing significant administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value. Email messages or attachments of this type must be retained appropriately as they relate to the established records series in the records retention schedule. Once it is determined that an email contains long-term value, employees are required to migrate the message (and/or attachments) from the email system to the appropriate content management system, and retain it for the retention period specified in the retention schedule. Examples include:

1. Email messages that set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction, or become a receipt.
2. Email that facilitates action, such as initiating, authorizing or completing a transaction in connection with municipal business.
3. Policies and directives.
4. Correspondence or memoranda related to official business.
5. Work schedules and assignments.
6. Any document that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction.
7. Final reports or recommendations (eliminates the need to keep draft and duplicate copies of the matter once it is finalized. Simply keep the final document).
8. Emails that have historical significance in that they are evidence of the function, policies, decisions or procedures of the Village or have public importance.

Section 5: Guidelines for Managing Paper and Electronic Documents

A) Documents of a Short-term or Temporary (Transitory) Value. Working documents used in the daily business of the Village should be stored on network drives and should be deleted when they no longer have value.

B) Documents of Long-term Value. Record documents should be stored in the Village's document management system and should be marked with the date they are eligible for disposal.

C) Paper Documents. Record paper documents may be converted to electronic for

long-term storage. However, the original paper may only be disposed of after permission is received from the state.

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