



A Community of Communities

Cape Breton Regional Municipality

Email Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of the CBRM email system and make users aware of what CBRM deems as acceptable and unacceptable use of its email system.

PERSONAL USE

Although CBRM's email system is meant for business use, CBRM allows the reasonable use of email for personal use if certain guidelines are adhered to:

- Personal use of email should not interfere with work.
- Personal emails must also adhere to the guidelines in this policy.
- Personal emails should be kept in a separate folder. The emails in this folder should be deleted weekly so as not to clog up the system.
- The forwarding of chain letters, junk mail, jokes and executables is strictly forbidden.
- Do not send mass mailings unless approved by your Director.
- All messages distributed via the company's email system, even personal emails, are CBRM's property, and are subject to FOIPOP .

BEST PRACTICES

CBRM considers email as an important means of communication and recognizes the importance of proper email content and speedy replies in conveying a professional image to both the public and internal to the organization. Therefore CBRM wishes users to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Writing emails:**
 - Write well-structured emails and use short, descriptive subjects.
 - Signatures should include your name, job title and company name.
 - Use the spell checker before you send out an email.
 - Do not send unnecessary attachments.
 - Do not write emails in capitals.
 - Do not use cc: or bcc: fields unless the cc: or bcc: recipient is aware that you will be copying a mail to him/her and knows what action, if any, to take.
 - If you forward mails, state clearly what action you expect the recipient to take.
 - Only send emails of which the content could be displayed on a public notice board. If they cannot be displayed publicly in their current state, consider rephrasing the email or using other means of communication.
 - Only mark emails as important if they really are important.
 - Be very wary of using groups when sending emails. Ensure all recipients in the group are those you intend to have sent the originating email.
 - NEVER send an email while in a heightened emotional state. Take the time to calm yourself and think about what it is you are trying to convey. Once an email has been sent and read, it cannot be retracted.

- **Replies to emails:**
 - Emails should be answered within a reasonable time 8 working hours during working days, but users must endeavor to answer priority emails sooner if Possible.
 - Priority emails are emails deal with issues that may have a detrimental impact on the Municipality.
- **Maintenance:**
 - Delete any email messages that you do not need to have a copy of, and set your email client to automatically empty your 'deleted items' on closing.

MAILBOX SIZE

Mailboxes will be restricted to a maximum size of **2 gigabytes per user**. Any exceptions will have to be supported by a business case and presented to the director of the appropriate department. An email retention system is being prepared which will automatically archive any email older than 1 year and move these emails to a safe location with no interaction from the end user. This system will also regularly search and delete any email older than 3 years. This will help streamline email delivery to every user within the municipality.

LEGAL RISKS

Email is a business communication tool and users are obliged to use this tool in a responsible, effective, and lawful manner. Although by its nature email seems to be less formal than other written communication, the same laws apply. Therefore, it is important that users are aware of the legal risks of e-mail, you and CBRM can be held liable:

- If you send emails with any libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.
- If you unlawfully forward confidential information.
- If you unlawfully forward or copy messages without permission.
- If you willingly send an attachment that contains a virus.

By following the guidelines in this policy, the email user can minimize the legal risks involved in the use of e-mail. If any user disregards the rules set out in this Email Policy, the user will be fully liable.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The following rules are required by law and are to be strictly adhered to:

- **It is strictly prohibited to send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, or obscene remarks. If you receive an e-mail of this nature, delete it immediately.**
- Do not forward a message without acquiring permission from the sender first.
- Do not send unsolicited email messages.
- Do not forge or attempt to forge email messages.
- Do not send email messages using another person's email account.
- Do not copy a message or attachment belonging to another user without permission of the originator.
- Do not disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending mail.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Avoid sending confidential information by e-mail. If you do, you must secure the information by including it in a Microsoft Word or Excel file and protecting it with a password. Then provide the recipient with the password by means of other communication, for instance by telephone.

SYSTEM MONITORING

You must have no expectation of privacy in anything you create, store, send, or receive on the CBRM's computer system. Your emails can be monitored without prior notification if the municipality deems this necessary. If there is evidence that you are not adhering to the guidelines set out in this policy, the CBRM reserves the right to revoke email access.

EMAIL ACCOUNTS

All email accounts maintained on our email systems are the property of CBRM. Passwords should not be given to other people and should be changed often. Email accounts not used for 90 days will be deactivated and possibly deleted.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or comments about this Email Policy, please contact John MacKinnon (Director of IT), 563-0839, jfmackinnon@cbrm.ns.ca. If you do not have any questions CBRM presumes that you understand and are aware of the rules and guidelines in this Email Policy and will adhere to them.

DECLARATION

I have read, understand, and acknowledge receipt of the Email policy. I will comply with the guidelines set out in this policy and understand that failure to do so may result in the revocation of email access.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Approved by Council: February 16, 2010