Email Retention Policy

Things to Consider: *Please consult the Things to Consider FAQ for additional guidelines and suggestions for personalizing the policy for your organization*

Last Update Status: *Retired*

1. Overview

See Purpose.

2. Purpose

The Email Retention Policy is intended to help employees determine what information sent or received by email should be retained and for how long.

The information covered in these guidelines includes, but is not limited to, information that is either stored or shared via electronic mail or instant messaging technologies.

All employees should familiarize themselves with the email retention topic areas that follow this introduction.

Questions about the proper classification of a specific piece of information should be addressed to your manager. Questions about these guidelines should be addressed to the Infosec Team.

3. Scope

This email retention policy is secondary to <Company Name> policy on Freedom of Information and Business Record Keeping. Any email that contains information in the scope of the Business Record Keeping policy should be treated in that manner. All <Company Name> email information is categorized into four main classifications with retention guidelines:

- Administrative Correspondence (4 years)
- Fiscal Correspondence (4 years)
- General Correspondence (1 year)
- Ephemeral Correspondence (Retain until read, destroy)

4. Policy

4.1 Administrative Correspondence

<Company Name> Administrative Correspondence includes, though is not limited to clarification of established company policy, including holidays, time card information, dress code, work place behavior and any legal issues such as intellectual property violations. All

email with the information sensitivity label Management Only shall be treated as Administrative Correspondence. To ensure Administrative Correspondence is retained, a mailbox admin@<Company Name> has been created, if you copy (cc) this address when you send email, retention will be administered by the IT Department.

4.2 Fiscal Correspondence

<Company Name> Fiscal Correspondence is all information related to revenue and expense for the company. To ensure Fiscal Correspondence is retained, a mailbox fiscal@<Company Name> has been created, if you copy (cc) this address when you send email, retention will be administered by the IT Department.

4.3 General Correspondence

<Company Name> General Correspondence covers information that relates to customer interaction and the operational decisions of the business. The individual employee is responsible for email retention of General Correspondence.

4.4 Ephemeral Correspondence

<Company Name> Ephemeral Correspondence is by far the largest category and includes personal email, requests for recommendations or review, email related to product development, updates and status reports.

4.5 Instant Messenger Correspondence

<Company Name> Instant Messenger General Correspondence may be saved with logging function of Instant Messenger, or copied into a file and saved. Instant Messenger conversations that are Administrative or Fiscal in nature should be copied into an email message and sent to the appropriate email retention address. The Jabber Secure IM Client is the only IM that is approved for use on <Company Name> computers.

4.6 Encrypted Communications

<Company Name> encrypted communications should be stored in a manner consistent with <Company Name> Information Sensitivity Policy, but in general, information should be stored in a decrypted format.

4.7 Recovering Deleted Email via Backup Media

<Company Name> maintains backup tapes from the email server and once a quarter a set of tapes is taken out of the rotation and they are moved offsite. No effort will be made to remove email from the offsite backup tapes.

4.8 General Standards

Approved Electronic Mail

Includes all mail systems supported by the IT Support Team. These include, but are not necessarily limited to, [insert corporate supported mailers here…]. If you have a business need to use other mailers contact the appropriate support organization.

Approved Encrypted email and files
Techniques include the use of DES and PGP. DES encryption is available via many different public domain packages on all platforms. PGP use within <Company Name> is done via a license. Please contact the appropriate support organization if you require a license.

Approved Instant Messenger
The Jabber Secure IM Client is the only IM that is approved for use on <Company Name> computers.

Individual Access Controls
Individual Access Controls are methods of electronically protecting files from being accessed by people other than those specifically designated by the owner. On UNIX machines, this is accomplished by careful use of the chmod command (use *man chmod* to find out more about it). On Mac's and PC's, this includes using passwords on screensavers, such as Disklock.

Insecure Internet Links
Insecure Internet Links are all network links that originate from a locale or travel over lines that are not totally under the control of <Company Name>.

Encryption
Secure <Company Name> Sensitive information in accordance with the *Acceptable Encryption Policy*. International issues regarding encryption are complex. Follow corporate guidelines on export controls on cryptography, and consult your manager and/or corporate legal services for further guidance.

5. Policy Compliance

5.1 Compliance Measurement

The Infosec team will verify compliance to this policy through various methods, including but not limited to, periodic walk-thrus, video monitoring, business tool reports, internal and external audits, and feedback to the policy owner.

5.2 Exceptions
Any exception to the policy must be approved by the Infosec team in advance.

5.3 Non-Compliance
An employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

6 Related Standards, Policies and Processes

- Acceptable Encryption Policy

7 Definitions and Terms

None

8 Revision History

Date of Change	Responsible	Summary of Change
July 2014	SANS Policy Team	Converted to new format and retired. Appropriate items merged into Email Policy.