

Louisiana State Archives Policy

Electronic Mail (E-mail) Retention

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that electronic mail is maintained in accordance with approved records retention policies, accepted record keeping practices and laws as required by L.A.R.S. Title 44.

Policy:

Electronic Mail (E-mail) is not a record series for retention scheduling purposes. Rather, the retention of E-mail must be based on content, not on media type, artificial duration (i.e. 90 days) or on storage limitations. E-mail should be retained for the same duration as other records of similar content included in a given record series on an approved retention schedule.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Louisiana public bodies as defined in LA. R. S. 44:1. This policy does not apply to the transitory E-mail records (those E-mails having limited or no administrative value to the public body and not essential to the fulfillment of statutory obligations or to the documentation of the public body) generated or received by a public body.

Transitory information includes the following: unsolicited and junk E-mails not related to agency work, Listserv and other E-mail broadcast lists that require subscription (including newspapers), reminders for meetings and events (i.e. cake in the conference room, staff meeting moved from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.), and personal non-work related E-mails received by employees.

There is no retention requirement for transitory messages. Public officials and employees receiving such communications may delete them immediately without obtaining approval from the State Archives.

Responsibilities:

All public bodies that fall under the scope of this policy must maintain their E-mail in a manner that complies with that public body's approved retention schedule and the records management practices already established for other media (paper, film) as required by law.

If a record series cannot be identified, a record series should be developed and included on the public body's approved retention schedule. Until the series is scheduled the E-mail should be maintained for at least three years.

All public bodies should communicate this policy to their employees and should take the steps necessary to ensure employee compliance with this policy.

Additional information may be found on the State Archives' Records Management web page at:
<http://www.sec.state.la.us/archives/records/recmgt-index.htm>

Effective Date: February 14, 2003