

Facility Directive



Title: E-mail Etiquette	Facility Directive Number: OS.020.0001
Related MD Statute/Regulations: Correctional Services Article, § 2-109, Annotated Code of Maryland	Supersedes: N/A
Related ACA Standards: N/A	Responsible Authority: <i>Anthony A. Gasken</i> Executive Assistant to the Secretary
Related MCCS Standards: N/A	Effective Date: July 15, 2015 Number of Pages: 4

Stephen T Moyer
Secretary

.01 Purpose.

This directive establishes style and formatting procedures and minimum requirements for Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department) — Office of the Secretary Executive and Support staff when sending electronic mail (e-mail) messages.

.02 Scope.

This directive applies to Secretary’s Executive and Support Staff members as designated by the Department organizational chart.

.03 Policy.

- A. An employee shall report through the official chain of command occurrences that have the potential for positive or negative impact on the Department, a Department employee, or an inmate.
- B. All official e-mail communications initiated or replied to by the Office of the Secretary shall follow basic rules of etiquette established by this directive.
- C. Provisions established under this directive are in addition to requirements for reporting newsworthy events established under COMM.010.0022.

.04 Definitions.

- A. In this directive, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

Facility Directive Number: OS.020.0001

B. Terms Defined.

(1) Electronic Mail.

- (a) “Electronic mail (e-mail)” means the electronic transfer of text, images, or other media over the Internet through an intermediate telecommunications system that is created, sent, received, or stored in a format that may only be accessed by using a computer or a device capable of accessing the Internet.
- (b) “Electronic mail (e-mail)” includes attachments to e-mail.

(2) Newsworthy Event.

- (a) “Newsworthy event” means an occurrence or an issue involving the Department, a Department employee or inmate that may be of interest to the Office of the Governor, the public in general, or the media.
- (b) “Newsworthy event” includes, but may not be limited to, the following:
 - (i) Riot;
 - (ii) Hostage situation;
 - (iii) Escape or walk-off;
 - (iv) Injury to a Department employee (involving medical treatment);
 - (v) Death of a Department employee or a significant member of the employee’s family;
 - (vi) An event that affects public safety;
 - (vii) Disturbance;
 - (vii) Facility lockdown;
 - (viii) Policy or procedure issue with potential for notoriety;
 - (ix) Injury to an inmate.
 - (x) Events involving use of force, especially when injury is involved;
 - (xi) Inmate death, especially other than by natural causes;
 - (xii) Occurrences that generate an inquiry from the Office of the Governor;
 - (xiii) Incidents initiating an internal investigation, including an allegation of a crime committed by an inmate or Department employee;

Facility Directive Number: OS.020.0001

- (xiv) Occurrences disrupting daily operations, e.g. water main breaks, flooding, fires, evacuations, electrical outages, or security breaches;
- (xv) Incidents occurring at a Department owned or leased facility that involves a 9-1-1 call;
- (xvi) Incidents that have media interest;
- (xvii) Incidents that carry aspects of political interest; or
- (xviii) Inmate involvement in a crime of violence.

.05 Procedures/Responsibilities.

- A. Department e-mail is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), [5 U.S.C. §552](#) that allows for the full or partial disclosure of previously unreleased information and documents controlled by the government of the United States of America. Each of the 50 United States has freedom of information law governing documents at the state and local level. General Provisions Article, Title 4, Subtitles 1 — 6, Annotated Code of Maryland is [Maryland's Public Information Act](#).
- B. With the knowledge that Department e-mail communications are subject to disclosure under the provisions cited in §.05A of this directive, the following shall apply to e-mails sent or replied to by a member of the Secretary's direct reports (Executive or Support staff):
 - (1) Upon receipt of an e-mail, the individual receiving the e-mail shall reply as soon as possible, at least to acknowledge receipt and provide an indication that there will be follow up.
 - (2) When faced with a newsworthy event, if after responding to the incoming communication that requires immediate attention (action or information) a response has not been received within 15 minutes, e-mail the Secretary with the available information and action taken concerning the event.
 - (3) If a communication is received from a government official, the communication shall be forwarded to the attention of the Secretary, before a response is made to the individual initiating the contact.
 - (4) An e-mail addressed to the Secretary shall be from a member of the Secretary's Executive or Support Staff, unless the subordinate employee is directed otherwise by the Executive or Support staff member.
 - (5) The following are basics that are to be applied to e-mails sent or replied to by a member of the Secretary's Executive or Support staff:
 - (a) Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation;
 - (b) Use the Outlook "Review" function to check the message before sending;
 - (c) Do not AUTOMATICALLY copy the Secretary on ALL e-mails;
 - (d) Do not AUTOMATICALLY "Reply All" when responding to an e-mail, edit out all except individuals that are to be involved with the communication;

Facility Directive Number: OS.020.0001

- (e) When replying to an e-mail, edit out information from the original message that is unnecessary to the purpose of the communication;
- (f) Do not use all capital letters;
- (g) Only copy individuals with a need to know about the information in the message;
- (h) Refrain from the use of acronyms, at a minimum, spell out the phrase or title followed by the acronym in parenthesis and then use the acronym in the remainder of the message; and
- (i) Include the telephone number of the assigned Department mobile communication device that may be used to contact the individual sending the communication.

.06 Attachments/Links.

There are no attachments or links to this directive.

.07 History.

This directive supersedes provisions of any prior existing unit communication with which it may be in conflict.

.08 Operations Distribution.

N/A