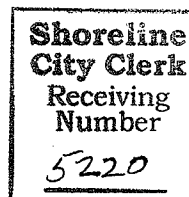
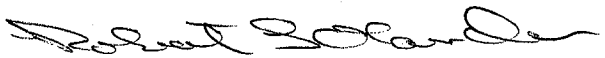


PP-09-001



**Shoreline Policy and Procedure**  
**CMO – Email Management and Retention – CMO 09-01**

<p align="center"><b>Subject:</b> Email Management and Retention</p>	<p align="center"><b>Code and Statutory Authority:</b> Chapter 2.35 SMC, Chapter 40.14 RCW, Chapter 42.56 RCW, Chapter 434-610 WAC, Chapter 434-615 WAC, and Chapter 434-662 WAC</p>
<p align="center"><b>Effective Date:</b> May 1, 2009</p>	<p align="center"><b>Approved By:</b> Robert L. Olander, City Manager</p> 
<p align="center"><b>Related Policies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoreline Employee Handbook, Section 8.12</li> <li>• Shoreline Employee Guidelines for Records Management and Public Disclosure</li> </ul>	

**1.0 PURPOSE**

City communication systems such as electronic mail (email) are intended to increase employee and public official productivity in the conduct of their official duties with the City. One of the greatest challenges of managing email effectively is to ensure that all email is readily available, accessible, and in a useable electronic format if needed in the future. This means that the identity, purpose, and location of email records are predictable, consistent, and reliable, the methods for access and retrieval are simple and well defined, and records management practices are incorporated into day-to-day business activities. These practices are beneficial for good business continuity and for locating retained email for later usage.

This policy has been created to ensure that the use of email in connection with official public business is managed in a way that adheres to legal mandates and proper procedures, and that email classified as public records are retained for the duration of the retention periods approved for their records series. The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Address the proper use of the City’s email system;
2. Confirm that email used in the conduct of official city business are public records;
3. Explain that all email generated on the City’s email system will be retained centrally for record retention purposes;
4. Explain that all email generated on email systems not owned by the City but used in connection with official public business must be retained appropriately;
5. Confirm that every email user is responsible for managing his or her own email on the City’s email system, even though the email may not need to be legally retained; and
6. Establish recommended guidelines concerning how to appropriately manage email.

This policy applies to all users of email used in connection with official public business, including employees, elected officials, appointed officials of City boards, commissions and advisory committees, consultants, and volunteers.

## **2.0 PROPER USE OF THE CITY'S EMAIL SYSTEM**

The City of Shoreline owns its electronic computing systems and all records transmitted and maintained on these systems, including email. The City's email system may not be used in a way that could be disruptive or offensive to others, and may not be used to solicit employees or public officials for any purpose. For guidelines on the appropriate use of email and other communication systems, refer to section 8.04, Solicitations and Distribution of Literature, and section 8.12, Telephone, Email, Voice Mail and Other Communication Systems and City Equipment, of the *City of Shoreline Employee Handbook*.

The nature of email may encourage an informal, "chatty" form of expression. Thus, it is critical that email messages be composed in a professional manner--businesslike, courteous and civil. Email messages should also be edited for informational and grammatical accuracy, appropriate to the nature of the communication, prior to being sent.

## **3.0 EMAIL AS A PUBLIC RECORD**

The State of Washington defines a public record as any paper, correspondence, form, bound volume, photograph, film, sound recording, magnetic record, map, drawing, or other document, regardless of media, that has been created or received by any state or local government agency in connection with the transaction of public business or relating to the conduct or performance of government (RCW 40.14.010 and WAC 434-610-020). This definition includes information created in machine readable forms by computers and computer-like devices, communications equipment, and video and audio recorders.

Thus, *email that is created or received by employees or public officials in connection with official public business is a public record* and is subject to the Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW) and the law governing preservation and destruction of public records (Chapter 40.14 RCW). Furthermore, electronic records such as email must be retained in electronic format and remain usable, searchable, retrievable and authentic for the length of the designated retention period (WAC 434-662-040). Printing and retaining a hard copy is not a substitute for the electronic version.

### **3.1 Public Records and Emails Containing Information with no Retention Value**

Not all email created or received by email users contain public record information. Email systems can send and receive both public records and information with no retention value. Therefore, email messages can be divided into two types – public records and emails containing information with no retention value:

Public records include email messages used in connection with the transaction of public business or relating to the conduct or performance of government. Public records include, but are not limited to, policies and directives, correspondence or memoranda related to official public business, agendas and minutes of meetings, complaints or comments to staff or Council, and final reports/recommendations.

Emails containing information with no retention value include email messages not used in connection with the transaction of public business or agency operations, and are often informal short-term communications, such as personal email messages, meeting notices, reminders, and information-only copies or extracts of documents distributed for convenience of reference.

## **4.0 RETENTION OF EMAIL ON THE CITY'S EMAIL SYSTEM**

In order to make sure that all email generated on the City's email system that is created or received in connection with official public business is retained in electronic format and for the for the length of the designated retention period, a copy of *every* sent and received email (public records and email containing information with no retention value) generated from *every* City email account will be retained centrally within the City's computing system for a period of 10 years. This also includes email that captures voicemail from the City's phone system, if this capability is utilized. The retained email will then be archived in a searchable central archival system. This will guarantee that all emails classified as public records will be retained and archived electronically for the duration of their mandated retention period as per the State's Record Retention Schedule. After this 10 year period, these email copies will be automatically deleted from the central archival system.

### **4.1 Emails Classified as Public Records That Relate to 'Project Files'**

While the vast majority of emails will fall within this 10 year deletion parameter, there may be some cases where emails will belong to a project file that must be kept for longer than this automatic 10 year period. "Project files" include but are not limited to files in the following areas: personnel files, individual volunteer files, claims for damages, code enforcement actions, construction projects (both design and construction), parks projects (both design and construction), debt collection, employee claims, and right-of-way use. Emails classified as public records that are part of a project file must be retained for six (6) years after completion of a project or action. *Thus, if a project or action is not expected to be completed within four (4) years from the date of its inception, the sender and the recipient of emails classified as public records that are related to the project or action must take steps to ensure that they retain the emails for six (6) years after the project or action is completed.*

In order to archive project file emails appropriately, email users should place these emails on the K:Shared drive on the City's computing system. To utilize the K:Shared drive, use your mouse to left click and drag an email or email folder from any Outlook folder (Inbox, Sent Mail, other created email folder, etc.) and place it in the appropriate K:Shared archival folder. As dragging an email from an Outlook folder to the K:Shared folder makes a copy of the original email, you will need to manage the original email in your individual City email account as noted below in Section 4.3.

If it is unknown at the beginning of a project or action what the duration of the project or action will be, the sender and recipient of emails relating to the project or action should archive these emails as noted above. This will guarantee that these public records are archived properly and will not be disposed of after 10 years in the central archival system. If it is later determined that a project or action *will not last longer than four years*, it is then recommended to delete all of the archived project file emails in the K:Shared drive.

### **4.2 Public Records Requests Involving Retained Email**

All public records requests that relate to email will be responded to by searching the central email archival system or the K:Shared archival folder for project file emails. Email users are reminded that all retained email in the central archival system and the K:Shared archival folder, including emails containing information with no retention value, are subject to search for purposes of responding to records requests or for other purposes authorized by the City Manager as outlined in section 8.12 of

the *City of Shoreline Employee Handbook*, and are potentially disclosable to the public, unless deemed exempt.

#### **4.3 Retention of Email in Individual City Email Accounts**

Due to the central retention of email and the retention of some project file emails on the K:Shared drive, email users are not required to keep email identified as public records in their individual City email accounts. However, when email is saved in an individual's City email account for ease of reference or to help document the analysis and development of a policy or project, email should be managed and organized as explained in section 5.0 below. As well, all email users are required to keep all emails classified as public records in their individual City email accounts that were generated prior to the effective date of this policy for the duration of their retention period.

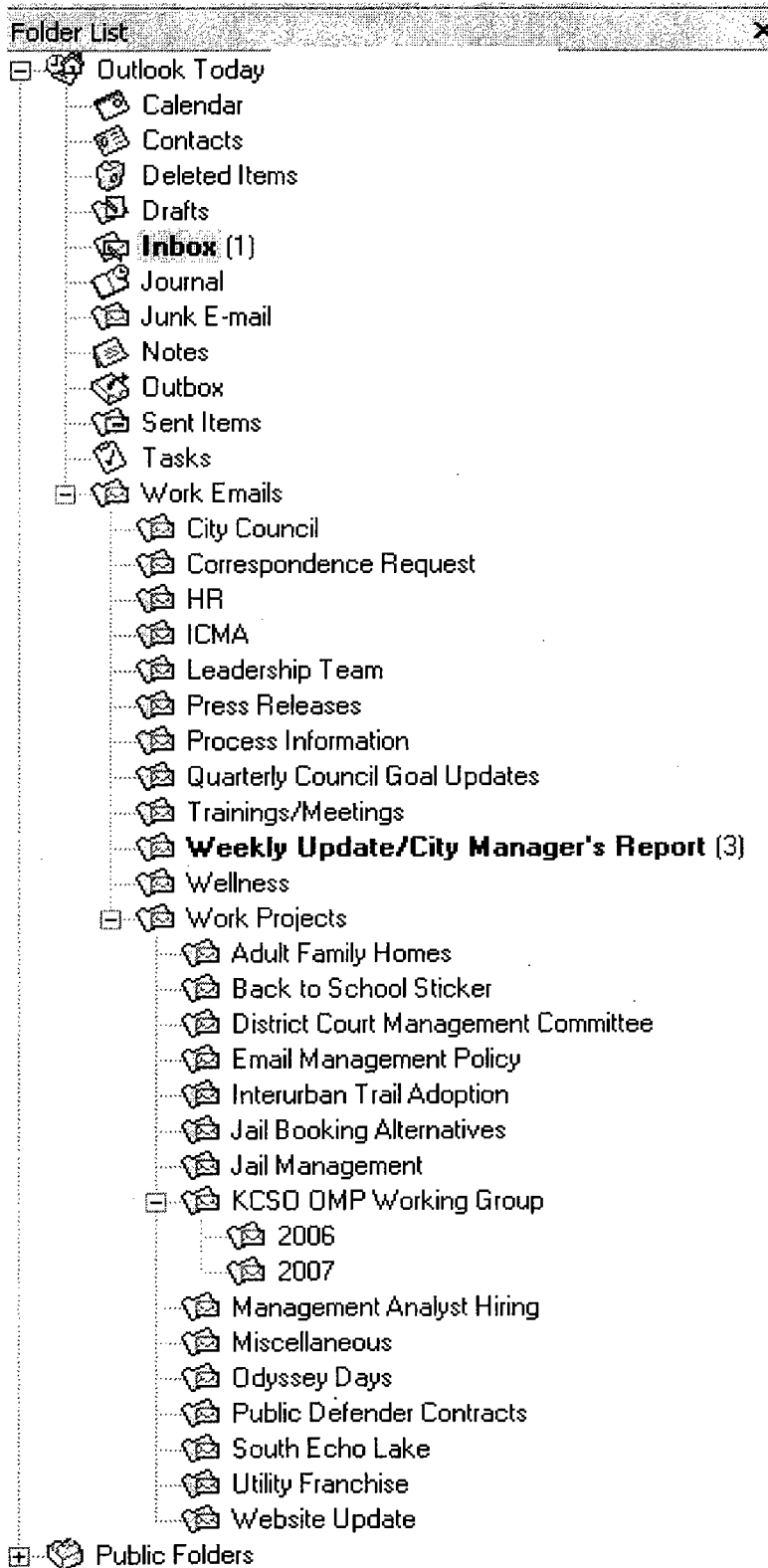
### **5.0 MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL CITY EMAIL ACCOUNTS**

City of Shoreline email users are responsible for managing their own City email accounts while employed at or engaged with the City of Shoreline. This will ensure that all email in individual email accounts is readily available, accessible, and in a useable electronic format for future reference. Email users are required to delete emails containing information with no retention value, and should delete emails classified as public records when they are no longer useful for reference purposes or to help document the analysis and development of a policy or project. This will help email users better manage the email that is retained in their individual email accounts and will greatly decrease computer server capacity issues. Upon separation from service at the City, it is the responsibility of the Department Director to coordinate with the departing employee or public official, the Department Records Coordinator, and the IT Department to make sure that the email user's individual City email account is transferred to a Department-accessible server (G:Drive) or other electronic storage area for future accessibility if needed.

#### **5.1 Best Practices - Recommended Email Management System for Individual City Email Accounts**

Within the Microsoft Outlook email system, email users have the option of creating a folder taxonomy to archive emails that are not being accessed regularly (example on the following page). After brief periods in the *Sent Mail* folder or *Inbox* folder, emails may be transferred to these created folders based on the email's content. For example, an email relating to your participation in a working group might be archived in a created folder labeled "KCSO OMP Working Group". Sub-folders can also be created under this major folder to archive emails by content (i.e., "Working Group minutes", or "Working Group Staff Report"), by year ("2007", "2008"), or by other aspects of the program. When emails are placed in created folders, all of the content, email header information, and metadata will be saved just as it is saved in an *Inbox* or *Sent Mail* folder.

To create additional folders in Microsoft Outlook, use the Folder List tool bar on the left of the Outlook window. Left click to highlight the folder you want to create another folder in (for example, the "Outlook Today" folder), and then right click your mouse. This will bring up a "pop-up-box menu" which will allow you to click on the "New Folder" icon. After clicking on "New Folder", you will then be asked to name the folder. It should then appear in your folder list. To move folders around, you can also left click and highlight a folder, and then while holding down the left mouse button, drag the folder to your desired location.



## 6.0 RETENTION OF EMAIL ON EXTERNAL EMAIL SYSTEMS

Email that has been created or received by employees or public officials in connection with the transaction of public business does not necessarily have to be created or received on the City's email system. External and/or "web-based" email systems, such as hotmail, yahoo or gmail may be used by City employees, public officials, consultants and volunteers to create or receive emails that are classified as public records. Thus, all email that has been generated or received on external email systems not owned by the City but used in connection with official public business must be retained appropriately. As there is no central retention system to retain these emails, it is the email user's responsibility to appropriately retain these emails in electronic form for the duration of their retention period.

To facilitate appropriate retention, an email user who generates an email classified as a public record on an external email system should carbon copy (cc:) the email to their City email account (if they have one) or to the designated department clerk. Received emails relating to official public business should be forward to the email users City email account for response if a response will be generated. These actions will guarantee that the email will be captured in the City's central retention system and be retained for the duration of its retention period.

## 7.0 DEFINITIONS

- *Attachment.* A document linked with an email message and transmitted with it. The attached document is an integral part of the email rather than a separate entity, so that both documents form the record.
- *Electronic record.* A record containing machine-readable, as opposed to human-readable, information.
- *Electronic recordkeeping.* The electronic creation, organization, use, maintenance, and disposition of records.
- *Email containing information with no retention value.* Email messages not used in connection with the transaction of public business or agency operations, such as personal messages and announcements not related to official business, information-only copies, or extracts of documents distributed for reference or convenience.
- *Metadata.* "Data about the data". Descriptive information that facilitates management of, and access to, the objects being described.
- *Public record.* Any paper, correspondence, form, bound volume, film, magnetic record, drawing, or other document, regardless of media, that has been created or received by any state or local government agency during the course of public business (RCW 40.14.010 and WAC 434-610-020). This includes information created in machine readable forms by computers and computer-like devices, communications equipment, and video and audio recorders.
- *Record retention schedule.* A comprehensive list of records series, provided by the State of Washington, indicating for each series the length of time it is to be maintained, and when such series may be reviewed for archival retention.
- *Record series.* A group of related records, performing a particular function, which is used as a unit, filed as a unit and can be disposed of as a unit.
- *Retention period.* The minimum length of time records in a particular records series must be retained. The email retention requirements are the same as the retention requirements for similar paper records as provided by the State of Washington Local Government General Records Retention Schedule approved by the Washington State Local Records Committee.
- *Users.* Includes, but is not limited to, city employees, elected officials, appointed officials of City boards, commissions and advisory committees, consultants, and volunteers.