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EMS TRANSMISSION

Instruction Memorandum No. HR-98-043

Expires 9/30/99

To: BC, HR, and RS Employees

From: Director, National Human Resources Management Center

Subject: Managing your E-Mail and Automatic E-Mail Deletion Policies

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) which governs the records operations of ALL Federal agencies, recently declared that certain employee e-mail messages are official agency records, and must be preserved like any other type of official record. These new NARA regulations have made **you**, as the e-mail user, responsible for properly retaining and deleting e-mail records. The purpose of this IM is to establish standards for managing your e-mail and also to inform users of DOI's e-mail standards for automatic deletion of e-mail.

**What is considered an official e-mail record?**

The best rule of thumb you can apply to determine whether an e-mail message is or isn't a record is to focus on the **content** of the information **not on the method** used to send it. If the information (content) in the e-mail message would have been filed if it had been created on paper, then the e-mail message (and accompanying transmission data) should also be printed and filed. As a general rule, e-mail that:

- documents the formulation of basic policies and decisions;
- conveys statements of policy or the rationale for official decisions or actions;
- documents important meetings;
- requests actions or information from field offices or commits significant resources or employee service(s);

are considered official e-mail records. You must print the message and transmission data (the INFO screen showing who sent and received the message), and file the documents in the proper official paper filing system (case file, subject file, etc.).

**Aren't we trying to reduce paper?** Until BLM has an official electronic file management system, e.g., an electronic central files, we must use the only official filing system we have which is our paper system. HR-250 is currently working with a Bureau team to test a web-based software system which may serve as our official electronic file management system.

### **Why can't I save e-mail messages forever?**

Storing a large number of e-mail messages in user mailboxes affects the e-mail system's disk space and the system's response time. As a rule of thumb, you should keep no more than 50 messages in either the In, Out or Trash Mail Boxes. In addition, the Department of the Interior has established e-mail retention standards for automatically deleting or archiving e-mail to recover disk space for the system.

### **When will the system administrator delete my e-mail?**

To adhere to DOI standards, system administrators are to set the system to automatically delete e-mail over 30 days old from your In Box, Out Box, Trash Box and your Personal Folders in GroupWise. *Therefore, you have 30 days to make a decision on how to dispose of your e-mail messages.* The system administrator will begin automatic deletion procedures as outlined in this IM on August 7th, 1998.

### **Can I save all my e-mail to my PC hard drive or my shared directory on the Local Area Network (LAN)?**

Saving *all* e-mail messages is not an option. Storing a large number of e-mail messages on a user's hard drive or the LAN affects the system's disk space and response time. Copies of general e-mail sent to all employees, should be deleted as soon as you no longer need them for reference. For e-mail records that meet the criteria of an official record, you need to print and file the document to our official paper system, then immediately delete from your e-mail system. E-mail such as IMs or IBs addressed to all employees can be deleted after being read as copies of these documents are maintained on the BLM's internal web site at <http://web.blm.gov>. PC's and local area networks have limited memory capabilities. It's always wise to practice good record keeping/file management habits with your PC files as well as your paper files. For instance, the disposition authority for word processing files is to dispose of when no longer needed for updating or revision. A good rule of thumb is that if you will not be using the word processing file within the next six months, you should archive off onto a disk rather than maintain on your system indefinitely.

### **What do I do if I have problems with my e-mail?**

Any problems with e-mail or scheduling services in GroupWise should be directed to the NCHelp desk at 236-0611.

If you have any questions regarding e-mail records in general, please contact Pat Day, Records Administrator, at 236-6362.

Signed  
Linda D. Sedbrook  
Director, NHRMC

Authenticated  
Terri Jeffries

### **Distribution**

NI - 100, Reading File  
RS-150A, BLM Library