

Email Records Management for Local Government

Presented by Heidi Steed | August 2020



Utah Division of Archives
and Records Service

Overview

Basics of government email records management

- Practical retention advice
- Tips for clearing out inboxes
- Best practices for records access

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- Best practices for records access

Want to know more about records management? More training videos available on our website!

<https://archives.utah.gov/rim/training-videos.html>



Are emails records?!

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YES!...

Are emails records?!

YES!... ..When they meet the criteria outlined in GRAMA

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YES!...

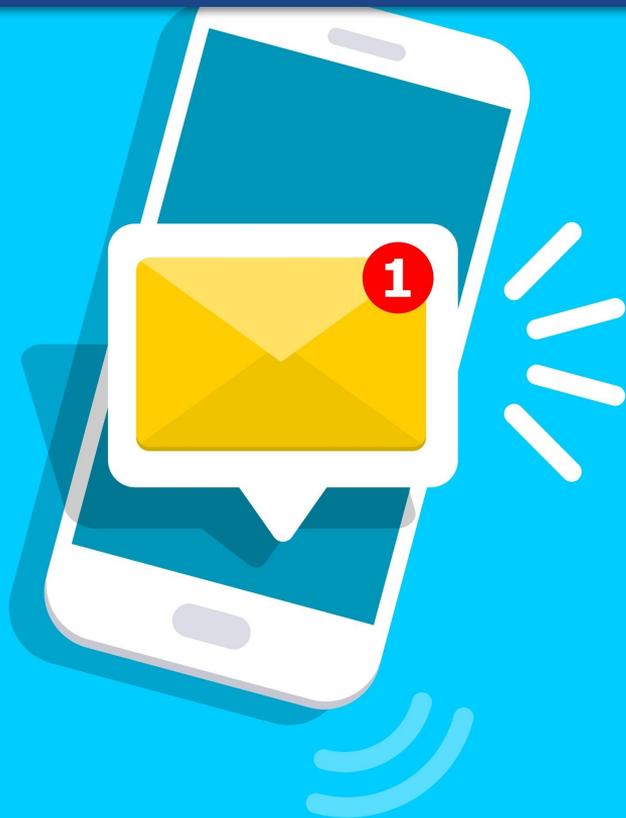
...When they meet the criteria outlined in GRAMA

22) (a) "Record" means a book, letter, document, paper, map, plan, photograph, film, card, tape, recording, electronic data, or other documentary material **regardless of physical form or characteristics:**

- (i) that is **prepared, owned, received, or retained** by a governmental entity or political subdivision; and
- (ii) where all of the information in the original is **reproducible** by photocopy or other mechanical or electronic means

Utah Code 63G-2-103

What if I access my work email on my personal computer?



What if I access my work email on my personal computer?



- Content and purpose determine if a record is subject to GRAMA. Not the device
- Keep personal business on personal accounts and conduct government business on government accounts
- Download, forward or copy government records not created on government devices to one as soon as reasonable

Why is email records management so hard?!

Why is email records management so hard?!

- There are a lot of emails created every day!
- Email management is reliant on individuals to do their part
- People need to understand their unique function and which records they are responsible for creating and retaining
- Everyone needs to know the basics of records management in order to properly manage accounts, including:
 - Retention
 - Destruction
 - Access
- It requires a lot of communication!



Why is email management so important?



Why is email management so important?



- Email is an essential tool for communication and productivity
- Can save time and money searching for information
- Email is a key way to sabotage government work through delivery of malware

Email Retention and Deletion

How long must I keep email?

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="arrow"/>	Asana	[Virtual Event] We're reimagining the future of work - Get an exc...	Jun 11
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="arrow"/>	NAGARA Community...	Clearinghouse Community Digest for Monday June 8, 2020 - 1 r...	Jun 9

Not a record...still needs to be managed

- Junk mail, commercial publications and personal correspondence (not work-related) are not records according to GRAMA (Utah Code 63G-2-103(22)(b)(i)(vi))
- Toss out as soon as it is no longer needed
- Avoid using work accounts for personal business



Useful Email Retention Schedules for Local Government

Transitory correspondence (GRS-1759)

[View](#) | [PDF](#)

Incoming and outgoing **correspondence**, regardless of format or mode of transmission, related to matters of short-term interest. Transmittal **correspondence**, including email, is **transitory** unless part of another process. This **correspondence** does not impact agency functions. When resolved, there is no further use or purpose.

Retain until resolution of issue, and then destroy records.

Effective 2018-07-12

Local government routine administrative correspondence (GRS-1760)

[View](#) | [PDF](#)

Incoming and outgoing business-related **correspondence**, regardless of format or mode of transmission, created in the course of administering agency functions and programs. **Administrative correspondence** documents work accomplished, transactions made, or actions taken. This **correspondence** documents the implementation of agency functions rather than the creation of functions or policies. Business-related **correspondence**, including email, that is related to a core function with an associated retention schedule should follow that associated schedule.

Retain for 3 years, and then destroy records.

Effective 2018-07-12



Useful Email Retention Schedules for Local Government

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Effective 2018-07-12

- Can be applied to most messages in your inbox
- Matters of short term interest
- Don't impact agency function or how the agency does business
- Delete as soon as there is no further use



Useful Email Retention Schedules for Local Government

Local government **routine administrative correspondence** (GRS-1760)

[View](#) | [PDF](#)

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Retain for 3 years, and then destroy records.

Effective 2018-07-12

- A lot of email will qualify as routine administrative correspondence.
- These records document typical actions taken, work accomplished and transaction made as a result of doing your job.



Other retentions may apply...

- If you think you'll want to reference the information after 3 years
- If it documents the creation of a program or new function
- If the email record documents an official decision, proof of a decision or provides needed context to the official decision or the attached records



Source: Julie Eichinger via stock.adobe.com

Permanent Email?

Program and **policy development** records (GRS-1717)

[View](#) | [PDF](#)

These records are created by executive decision-makers to document the establishment and dissemination of agency programs, **policies**, and procedures. Executive decision-makers may include the Chair, Director, Chief Administrative Officer, Public Information Officer, Commissioner, Mayor, or other internal administrators as identified by the executive office. Related correspondence and email is included.

Permanent. Retain for 3 years after final action. Transfer records to the archives.

Effective 2018-07-12

- There may be instances where emails are being created that are permanent in nature, based on the content and context of the decision making.

Avoid Email “Meetings”...

Most regular staff will not be creating permanent records in their email accounts.

Identify the individuals who might be (i.e. executives, appointed officials, board members) and encourage them to use other means to discuss program and policy development.

- Project management systems or software
- Shared drives or collaborative documents
- Calling official meetings when decisions need to be documented in minutes



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Executive Correspondence

- Executives should identify messages that may be significant in nature, or that document decision-making and work with their records officer to download those to a shared file drive
- If you can establish a good routine of identifying significant records, you can create internal policies for managing executive accounts
- Policies might mirror the NARA Capstone approach
- Make sure any policies you create are based on the appraisal of the informational value of records, and not on your email system capabilities or volume of GRAMA requests you receive



Tips for Managing Retention



Lauren Katz

to ARCHIVES ▾

Wed, Jul 29, 2:18 PM (12 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hello!

The COOP team is continuing our work to prepare us all for future disasters :)

Please review the contents of your emergency go-bag. You should have the following items. If you are missing any of these items, or if you have items that need to be replaced, please **EMAIL ME BACK PERSONALLY** with the item name and a replacement(s) will be ordered.

If you have everything you need, **please email** to let me know that as well :)

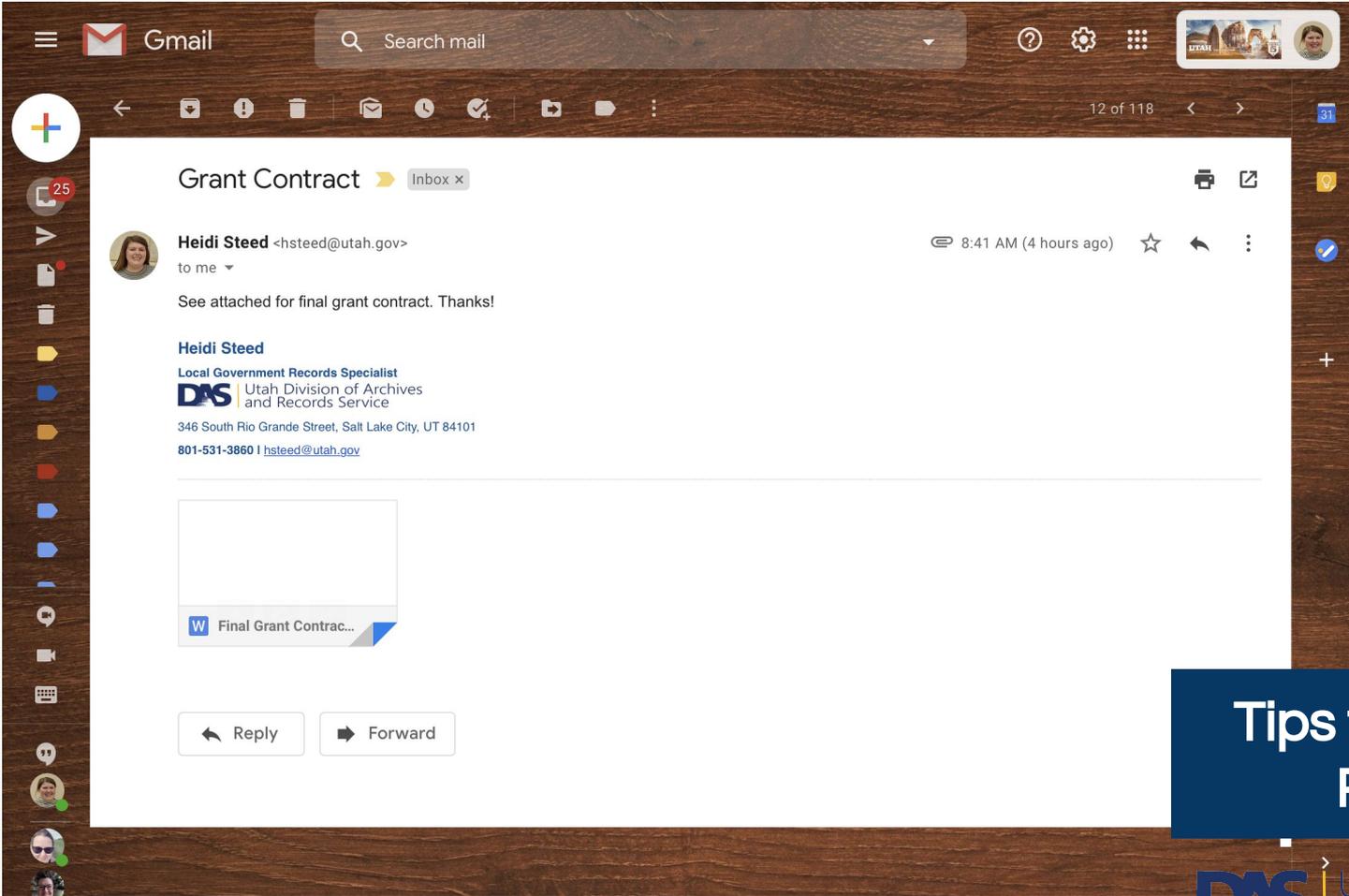
Thanks!
Lauren

ITEM:	NEED/REPLACE:
Whistle	
Solar Crank Radio	
Emergency Drinking Water	
Ziplock Bags	
Food Rations	
Lantern/Flashlight	
Duct Tape	
Sanitary Wipes	
Extra Batteries	
Snap Light	

Tips for Managing Retention

Tips for Managing Retention

- What is transitory to someone else, may be a record you need to retain longer
- It is important to know your job functions in order to determine which types of records you are responsible for retaining



Tips for Managing Retention

Tips for Managing Retention

- Attachments might need to be retained for a longer period of time than the email it was delivered in
- Attachments should be downloaded to a shared file system so they can be managed more effectively according to their retention
- Emails that share more context about the attachment or document associated decision-making should be downloaded (with relevant metadata) to a shared file system, and managed with the associated attachments
- Downloading emails with appropriate metadata typically means you download it in a format that maintains the IP address





Compose

▶ **Agency Visit

▶ **Series Creation/Updat...

▶ *Committees/Projects

▶ *Training/Outreach

▶ City/Municipality 1

▶ County 2

▶ Courts

▶ Dept. of Health

▶ EMAIL EXAMPLES (AU...

▶ Law Enforcement 2

Meet

▶ Start a meeting

▶ Join a meeting

Hangouts

▶ Heidi ▾



Use your tools!

Labels, folders, tags and more!

- Use tools to organize your inbox and help you identify records that might have a unique retention.
- Labels that identify the topic of an email can help you quickly identify groups of records that might be responsive to a records request.
- This can also help increase your work productivity so you aren't spending a lot of time searching for records.



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Compose

Explore your settings

- Grouping records in folders can help you apply retention more routinely.
- Set up rules for automatic labeling of certain email addresses in your settings.
- Every system is different, so check your system's unique functionality to see what it can help you do!

Meet

 Start a meeting

 Join a meeting

Hangouts



Heidi ▾



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Tips for Deleting Emails

- Explore your settings to see what your system's functionality is for routinely clearing out your trash folder
- Consider setting up a government-wide standard or policy for how often your trash folder will automatically delete
- Host an email deletion day, where you encourage people to take the time to give their inboxes some needed attention. Perhaps it could correspond with an existing "Shred Day" your local government already hosts!



Tips for Deleting Emails - Free Up Storage Space

1. Sort your inbox by file size, and manage your largest emails first. Consider downloading the largest files to a shared drive where there is more file storage
2. Use the "Archive" feature in your inbox to reduce the file size of records you are not actively using
3. Sort your inbox or folders in reverse chronological order and delete your oldest emails first



Tips for Deleting Emails - Documenting Deletion

- Documenting destruction is good records management practice
- But the volume of email records makes a destruction log impractical for transitory and routine administrative records
- Document deletion of these types of records by having a clear retention policy that defines these types records, and explains how often your agency intends to clear our trash folders and email servers



Tips for Deleting Emails - Documenting Deletion

- Make an effort to document the deletion of records that are following a unique retention schedule that falls outside of the routine and transitory correspondence category
- It can sometimes be better to download these types of email records to a shared drive, and manage their deletion along with other related records



Tips for Deleting Emails - Documenting Deletion

Disposition (or deletion) is **delayed** if records

- Ongoing investigation
- Required for possible litigation
- Litigation hold
- Pending GRAMA request or appeal
- Being used in an audit



Email Records Access



GRAMA Request Basics

Good to Know - Email Records Access

- **Embarrassment is not a classification.** Don't send it via email if you don't want it to be potentially accessed
- It is an acceptable practice for **individual owners of email accounts to search their own emails** and report to the records officer any responsive records. The records officer can then classify the responsive records and respond to the request



Source: Feodora via stock.adobe.com

Good to Know - Email Records Access

- It's okay to **ask requesters exactly what they are looking for**, and to **have them provide dates and keyword searches** to help narrow what are often overly broad requests
- **Government may charge staff time for search and retrieval and other direct costs associated with responding to a request**, including time spent making redactions. However, they cannot charge for reviewing records to determine whether they are subject to disclosure



Source: Feodora via stock.adobe.com



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Conclusion

Resources available on [Archives.utah.gov](https://archives.utah.gov), including the *Email Management Guideline*

Send any questions about this or other records management topics to recordsmanagement@utah.gov or call us at 801-531-3863

Thank you!

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