

E-mail Etiquette

E-mail has become the “memorandum” of the 21st Century. E-mail can be quick, but getting a message out quickly is not the only factor to consider. Misunderstandings can occur when people do not use e-mail appropriately or follow general etiquette. Additionally, employers (the state included) are liable for the actions of employees that use e-mail.



Be sure you know the rules and follow them. Check with your supervisor or the Employee Services office about policies and agency guidelines regarding e-mail.

Important Note!

All e-mail becomes part of the “public record,” even deleted items.

Use these 12 tips and you’ll gain a reputation for being courteous, clear and succinct:

1. Be concise. Lengthy sentences and lengthy e-mails are difficult to wade through.
2. Read e-mails and replies before sending. For subjects requiring extra care, get a co-worker or supervisor to proof your message.
3. Use tools such as spell check, grammar and punctuation. It only takes a moment to ensure you haven’t missed a common mistake.
4. Use bullets or numbers to denote multiple questions or answers. Re-read an e-mail before answering. If the writer asks multiple questions, a single answer may not suffice.
5. Send an answer the same day, but certainly within 24 hours. If a response requires more time, send an acknowledgment with an approximate timeframe for final response.
6. Keep the message thread.
7. Always add a clear and purposeful subject line.
8. Control your emotions. Responding in anger will usually make a bad situation worse.
9. Use caution when discussing confidential or sensitive information. Remember that once you click “send,” the message is out of your control.
10. Use “reply to all” sparingly.
11. Create a signature block using DAS-approved standards:
http://oregon.gov/DAS/docs/Templates/e-mail_signature_guide.pdf
12. Know when *not* to use e-mail. Sometimes the best form of communication is to pick up the phone or talk face-to-face.



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