# Ravalli County
## Information Technology Policy 4
# Electronic Mail
July 2011

**<u>This policy does not supersede state or federal laws and acceptable use policies.</u>**

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all County employees and contractors using County computer systems.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide requirements and guidance to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the County E-mail system.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. The County provides an E-mail system to be used for: conducting County business and delivering governmental services; transmitting and sharing information among governmental, research, and educational organizations; communicating and exchanging professional information; and conducting other appropriate County business. Appropriate County business may include office-related functions or activities.

2. The County E-mail system and related services are not to be used for extensive private, recreational, or personal activities. Break times and lunch hours are designated for personal activities only unless otherwise specified by department head in department policy.

3. All messages created, sent or retrieved over the County's systems are the property of Ravalli County. Employees have no expectation of privacy for any messages. <u>IT Director, Department Heads, and Elected Officials can monitor email for performance, troubleshooting, or if abuses are suspected.</u> Employees should not send confidential messages outside the County email system unless encryption is used to protect these types of messages.

4. Mailboxes will have a maximum limit of 300 Megabytes

The following items represent, but are not all inclusive, misuse of County E-mail resources:

1. Circulating chain letters

2. Using the County E-mail system for extensive use for private, recreational, or personal activities

3. Non-work related County-wide distributions of E-mail

4. Using personal E-mail accounts, such as Hotmail or Gmail, outside of the County-provided E-mail system

5. Other misuse activities as referenced in the Ravalli County End User Responsibilities policy

6. A derogatory, unsolicited response to a question is called "Flaming." Sending unsolicited mass mailing is called "Mail Storming." Both "Flaming" and "Mail Storming" are prohibited

7. Sending threatening, slanderous, sexually explicit, pornographic, or harassing messages is strictly prohibited

8. Sending communication that solicits support for or opposition to any political committee, the nomination or election of any person to public office, or the passage of a ballot issue

**GUIDELINES:**

1. Communications sent or received by the E-mail system in the official transaction of business may be considered documents under Article II, Section 9 of the Montana Constitution and public records under Title 2, Chapter 6, MCA, and should be generated and maintained accordingly. Communications containing confidential information, such as criminal justice information, medical information, and information protected by right of privacy should be safeguarded to maintain the confidentiality. Employees should delete items from their mailbox and sent items folders when they are no longer needed. If a mail item needs to be retained, it should be moved to an archive folder, electronic media, or be printed. Items placed in an employee's archive folder are the employee's responsibility. The need for retention of an item should be reevaluated after it has been stored for 6 months. Employees can contact the appropriate County records manager with any questions on retention schedules. Note: The deletion of a document does not mean the document has been eliminated from the system.

2. The County E-mail system does not employ encryption (security) features when it exits the County or State network. As such, employees should not send confidential messages outside of the County network via E-mail. What this means is confidential information should never be sent electronically to individuals who are not on the County or State network.

3. Employees should check their E-mail with a frequency appropriate to their job duties and their respective departmental policy.

4. Employees should not respond to any unsolicited E-mail.

5. The chance of receiving a virus increases with the use of E-mail. Many viruses come embedded as attachments. Suspicious E-mail messages should be forwarded to the Helpdesk for investigation before they are opened.

6. If you believe that you may be missing an E-mail contact the IT Department to see if the E-mail has been blocked by a SPAM firewall

7. Issues requiring a decision may be forwarded using the E-mail system, but it is the responsibility of the sender to obtain the final decision. If a response is not received via E-mail the sender must utilize other avenues to obtain the decision. Failure to respond to E-mail should not be construed to mean the recipient approves.

8. Use care and discretion when sending work-related E-mail to distribution lists and/or large groups of employees. Sending a large file to several employees can severely impact the network. If you have questions, please contact the Helpdesk before sending a large item or an item to several people.

9. Respect the privacy of E-mail messages. If the recipient of an E-mail message has some type of notification turned on, people near the recipients screen may be able to view a portion of the message.

10. Groups of employees can be defined in distribution lists. If you have a distribution list you think would benefit the County, suggest it to the Helpdesk.

11. Employees should make judicious use of the features that increase E-mail traffic and should strive to keep message and attachment sizes as small as possible. Use of graphics in messages should be avoided because they greatly increase the size of a message. All attachments over 1 megabyte should be compressed prior to sending.

***"Don't say, do, write, view, or acquire anything that you wouldn't be proud to have anyone in the world learn about if the electronic records are laid bare."***

**DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Departments may develop policies relating to this topic for use within their daily operations if those policies are approved by the IT Director prior to implementation. Departmental policies may only be used to clarify or further enhance this policy, not supersede it.

Department Request: A Department Head or Elected Official can request a report of email sent or received by any employee of the department. The request must be directed to the HR Director. Department requests must be in writing on a form provided by the IT Department or HR Director. If the request is a result of threatened legal action or a filed lawsuit, the County Attorney must receive a copy of the request to the HR Director.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

| Date | Purpose of Revision |
|---|---|
| June 20th 2011 | Adopted – County Commission |
| | |

REFERENCES - **Laws, rules, and applicable policies:**

MCA 2-2-121; MCA 2-6-101; MCA 2-6-403; MCA 45-6-311; Ravalli County Personnel Policies; Ravalli County IT Policies

SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

Change Date: