

Email and Internet Usage

Guideline

Internal Email Usage

Email is best used to send messages that are:

For business purposes: From a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy perspective, email has the same implications as a written or typed document and is a permanent part of the WCB's records. The use of email to transmit one's personal views is considered inappropriate since it may be perceived to represent a WCB point of view. You are responsible for all email messages that originate from your access id.

Also, non-business items like chain letters are inappropriate, use up a great deal of resources, and increase the risk of viruses being spread. You should simply delete them rather than forward them on. For information on the personal use of WCB's email system, please see the section called "Personal email".

Personal Email

Limited personal use of Internet email is acceptable during business hours.

Use of Internet email for personal use must be conducted on the employee's own time or during personal breaks within business hours and conform to these email usage guidelines as well as the Internet Acceptable Use Standards. The review of and adherence to these guidelines and standards are a condition of employment.

Be responsible with personal email use.

Internet email can go anywhere in the world and be forwarded to anyone with an email address. The message will always carry with it details about who created it and that the point of origin was the WCB-Alberta.

Many items that may seem harmless to one individual may be discriminatory or harassing to someone else. Examples of email that can fall into this category include:

- jokes or electronic greeting cards
- novelty animations and other pop-up windows
- ALL chain-letter style email

We cannot stress enough the importance of personal and reasonable judgment when using WCB's email system for personal use.

Email Etiquette

Be careful how you use Email.

The following identifies the standards that all individuals using WCB email facilities must understand and adopt. As with all business conduct, common sense must prevail. If there are any issues not covered in this document please refer them to Information Management.

Inappropriate use of WCB email services, whether for business or personal use, will not be tolerated and may be considered cause for disciplinary action, **up to and including termination of employment.**

Examples of inappropriate email use include but are not limited to:

- transmitting, retrieving or storing any communications of a discriminatory or harassing nature, or materials that are not suitable for the business environment. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks, profane or offensive language are to be transmitted via WCB facilities;
- making or posting indecent remarks or proposals;
- sharing computer games, pornographic material, etc.;
- forwarding chain letters;
- soliciting for personal gain or profit;
- representing personal opinions as those of the WCB;
- sharing copyrighted material for which WCB is not licensed such as software, books, magazines, etc.;
- gaining or attempting to gain unauthorized access to an internal or external computer system;
- initiating actions that cause errors or other problems on the WCB network; and
- conducting illegal activities.

Confidentiality

Remember: email is not private.

Message content should be governed by the awareness that email messages are official WCB documents, subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act and a permanent part of the WCB's records.

Standards for Work Processes

Security

Individuals are responsible for the security of their email account and password. Passwords must not be shared with anyone and must be changed periodically. Unattended email sessions must be logged off or otherwise secured to prevent unauthorized use.

Know who you are emailing!

Email should only be sent to known addressees where the internet email address was confirmed verbally (by phone or in conversation) or in writing (by letter, business card, etc.) to ensure it is a legitimate address. Use extra caution when addressing email.

Claimant related email

Information sent and received via email (messages and attachments) must be included in CIS and stored via Image. Email should be printed and included in 'Priority Indexing and Scanning' within 24 hours of receipt.

Any irrelevant information received should be handled in the same manner as for other communication methods (letter, fax, etc.)

Employer account related email

Routine emails may be treated like telephone calls: summarize the request and record your response in AIMS Contact Details.

Email with information specific to the employer's operations must be printed and sent to the paper file (in addition to being summarized in Contact Details).

External Email Usage Guidelines

WCB Email Forwarding Standards

The WCB's internal Lotus Notes Email system is secure and can be used for the transmission of confidential data within the organization. Automated Email forwarding to Email address outside of the WCB's Lotus Notes environment is not permitted.

Confidentiality

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act dictates that personal information must be protected from unauthorized disclosure to third parties and from use for purposes for which it was not collected. The FOIP Act defines personal information as:

- name, address, phone number;
- race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, political beliefs, associations;
- age, sex, marital status, family status;
- identifying numbers or symbols;
- fingerprints, blood type, or identifiable characteristics;
- health or health care history including mental disability;
- education, financial, employment or criminal history;
- anyone else's opinions about the individual; and
- the individual's personal views or opinions.

As you can see virtually all information used by the WCB is considered to be personal by the FOIP Act. So if we're going to use email, we are going to be exposing the WCB to risk by communicating personal information. However, we can mitigate that risk by drawing a distinction between personal and sensitive information.

- Personal information is everything defined by the FOIP Act. Personal information can be sent via email.
- Sensitive information is personal information that can be described as potentially embarrassing or harmful if it is improperly released. Sensitive information should not be committed to email. Examples on the claims side would include medical or psychiatric reports, issues around substance abuse, and so forth. Examples on the account side would include payroll information, assessment rate information, and so forth. The actual list is far from black and white so you are going to have to use your judgment as to whether email is an appropriate communication channel.

There are a few additional points to remember:

- Always report any inappropriate or suspicious use of email to your Team Leader or Manager.
- Remind our customers of our guidelines when they email information to the WCB that does not adhere to our high standards.
- Email has a higher risk of misuse than more traditional channels of communication such as letters, phone calls, and faxes. As such, it needs to be treated with more caution.
- The email system will automatically append the following confidentiality warning on all external email sent from the WCB:

"THIS MESSAGE IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE ADDRESSEE, IT MAY CONTAIN PRIVILEGED OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. ANY UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED. IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS MESSAGE IN ERROR, PLEASE NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY SO THAT WE MAY CORRECT OUR INTERNAL RECORDS. PLEASE THEN DELETE THE ORIGINAL EMAIL. THANK YOU."