


		Policy # 3104
Subject: Electronic Communications Retention Policy		
Responsible Department: Technology		
Effective Date: 11/2024		Revision Date: 11/2026
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish Sacramento County (County) retention periods for email, Teams Chat, Teams Channel Posts, and backup data from these solutions.

Authority

- Resolution 2024-0678
- Government Code sections 26202 and 26205.1
- County Chief Information Officer

Scope

This policy applies to all County departments, employees and users of County IT resources.

Policy

It is the policy of the County to establish retention periods for email, Teams Chat, Teams Channel Posts, and backup data from these solutions to:

- Conserve County resources;
- Ensure that data is kept only as long as it has operational, administrative, fiscal, or legal value, or as required by law; and
- reduce exposure to cybersecurity threats.

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Therefore, pursuant to this policy, data will be retained in the following applications as follows:

Email

The County shall retain all employee emails for two (2) years unless retention is suspended for one of the following reasons:

- The email contains official record information that requires longer retention as required by the department. Employees will set retention policies on emails according to department policy or retention schedules.
- The email pertains to reasonably anticipated, threatened, or actual legal proceedings, or is subject to a litigation hold, in which case the Litigation Hold Policy must be followed. Email must be identified for retention and retained regardless of age, and routine destruction is suspended, until directed by County Counsel.
- The email is sought by a pending Public Records Act (PRA) request.

To ensure a complete and transparent response to PRA requests and litigation holds, each employee is responsible for determining which communications should be retained for business or legal reasons and which should be discarded as they would any document obtained in the course of official duties.

All emails not identified for retention that remain in the system will be automatically deleted two years from the date they were created or received into the email system, without prior notification.

Email shall be viewed as a temporary communication tool, not a storage mechanism, and should be routinely discarded unless it is considered an official record defined by department policy. The use of the Personal Storage Table (PST) file capabilities within Outlook is discouraged; instead, best practices is to store all email within the Microsoft Exchange environment until it is deleted or saved according to department policy.

Following the termination of an employee's account, the mailbox will be retained for 90 days. To maintain a mailbox for longer than 90 days, the department must request an extension through the Service Desk.

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If an employee has questions regarding whether an email should be retained as an official record, they should seek guidance from a supervisor or manager. Retention policies can be applied to individual emails or folders.

Teams Records

Teams' data includes individual chats, Team channel posts, and shared content.

Teams' data shall be retained and will be automatically deleted without prior notification as follows:

- Individual Teams Chats – Thirty (30) days without an option for extended retention.
- Team Channel Posts – Two (2) years without the option for extended retention.
- Teams – Deleted, if inactive for 180 days.
 - Teams' owners will be notified and can renew the Team if it's still needed.
 - Team owners get renewal email notices 30, 15, and one day prior to deletion.

Back-ups

Back-up repositories are for disaster recovery purposes and not for record retention. Should it be needed, emails and Teams Channel Posts data will be automatically retained for six (6) months following deletion.

Review

Biennially

Attachment

ATT – 3104 Electronic Communications Retention Policy Procedures

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Glossary

The following are definitions of some of the words and acronyms that were used in this document.

County Employee – Employees, contractors, vendors, interns, extra-help and any party who provides services or work for the County and uses IT resources.

Email – In Outlook “email” refers to any item that appears in the inbox or any folder within Outlook including messages, voicemail and faxes.

Official Record - Any document or recorded information created, received, or maintained by a county agency in the course of conducting public business. These records are preserved as evidence of the agency’s organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities. Official records vary by department, employees should familiarize themselves with their departmental policies.