

## Electronic Mail

Supersedes: 06-30-97

Effective: 07-98

### PURPOSE

This memorandum sets forth the policies with regard to access to, review, or disclosure of electronic mail (“e-mail” messages sent or received by Boston Public Health Commission employees with the use of the BPHC e-mail system. It also sets forth policies on the proper use of the e-mail system.

### POLICY

E-mail is a corporate asset and critical component of communication. The E-mail system is provided by BPHC for employees to facilitate the performance of BPHC work. The contents are the property of the BPHC.

The BPHC monitors these systems and reserves the right to retrieve the contents when authorized by the Executive Director, Manager of Human Resources, Manager of Labor Relations, General Counsel or the Director of Security. Employees should not expect that their communications using the BPHC’s e-mail are private or confidential.

### PROCEDURE

#### ALLOWED USAGE

1. The e-mail system is provided to employees to assist them in carrying out the Commission’s business. The e-mail system permits employees to communicate with each other internally and with outside individuals and entities that the BPHC, in its sole discretion, decides should be connected to the system.
2. Personal use of e-mail by employees is allowed but shall not interfere with or conflict with business use.
3. Employees should exercise good judgment regarding the reasonableness of personal use. A “junkmail” group and other ad-hoc mail groups are available for employees to exchange information or post personal notices (i.e. “for sale”, “for rent”, “looking to buy”, etc.). Employees may sell items or post messages on junkmail or other ad-hoc mail groups as long as they do not violate the law or company policies.
4. The use of the group \*ALL is limited to business purposes.
5. Use of e-mail is limited to employees and authorized vendors, temporaries, or contractors.
6. The BPHC has the capability to access, review, copy and delete any messages sent, received or stored on the e-mail system. The BPHC reserves the right to access, review, copy, or delete all such messages for legitimate business and disciplinary purposes and to disclose them to any party (inside or outside the BPHC) it deems appropriate.

7. Should employees make incidental use of the e-mail system to transmit personal messages, such messages will be treated no differently from other messages. BPHC reserves the right to access, review, copy, delete or disclose them for any purpose.
8. Use of the BPHC's communications systems to set up or conduct personal businesses or send chain letters is prohibited.
9. The Commission's confidential messages should be distributed to personnel only. Forwarding to locations outside the BPHC network is prohibited.

#### PASSWORDS

1. Employees and authorized users are responsible for maintaining the security of accounts and passwords.
2. Users should change their passwords and take precautions to prevent unauthorized access to their mailboxes, such as logging off when their computer is unattended.

#### MISUSES OF ELECTRONIC-MAIL

1. Misuses of e-mail can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
2. Examples of misuse include but is not limited to the following:
  - transmitting or accessing obscene, profane, erotic or offensive material over any company communications system;
  - messages, jokes, pictures or forms which violate BPHC's discrimination or harassment policy, or any other policy, or create an intimidating or hostile work environment;
  - use of the e-mail system to engage in any communications that are defamatory, obscene, offensive, harassing or disclose personal information without authorization;
  - use of copyrighted information that violates the copyright;
  - breaking into the system or unauthorized use of a password/mailbox;
  - broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters; and,
  - solicitation to buy or sell goods or services is prohibited except through junkmail or ad-hoc mail groups.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

1. Employees must exercise a greater degree of caution in transmitting confidential information on the e-mail system than they take with other means of communicating information, (e.g., written memoranda, letters or phone calls) because of the reduced effort required to redistribute such information.
2. Confidential information should never be transmitted or forwarded to outside individuals or companies not authorized to receive that information and should not even be sent or forwarded to other employees inside the BPHC who do not need to know the information in order to perform their other job duties.

3. Always use care in addressing e-mail messages to make sure that messages are not inadvertently sent to outsiders or the wrong person inside the BPHC. In particular, exercise care when using distribution lists to make sure that all addresses are appropriate recipients of the information. Lists are not always kept current and individuals using lists should take measures to ensure that the lists are current.
4. Refrain from routinely forwarding messages containing BPHC confidential information to multiple parties unless there is a clear business need to do so.

#### VIEWING AND PROTECTING E-MAILS

1. In order to further guard against dissemination of confidential BPHC information, employees should not access their e-mail messages for the first time in the presence of others.
2. E-mail windows should not be left open on the screen when the computer is unattended.
3. E-mail passwords (as well as other computer passwords) should be routinely changed every three to four weeks.

#### ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS

1. Some of the messages sent, received or stored on the BPHC e-mail system will constitute confidential, privileged communications between the BPHC and either its in-house or outside attorneys.
2. Upon receipt of a message either from or to counsel, do not forward it or its contents to others inside the BPHC without counsel's authorization.
3. Never forward such messages or their contents to any other person without authorization from the attorney who sent the e-mail.

#### COPYRIGHTED INFORMATION

Use of the e-mail system to copy and / or transmit any documents, software, or other information protected by the copyright laws is prohibited.

#### E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

Please bear in mind that your e-mail messages may be read by someone other than the addressee you send them to and may even someday have to be disclosed to outside parties or a court in connection with a litigation.

Accordingly, please take care to ensure that your messages are courteous, professional and businesslike. In general, caution should be exercised in forwarding e-mails. The original writer may not have intended the e-mail for distribution.

#### STORING AND DELETING E-MAIL MESSAGES

All employees shall delete in a timely manner, all personal e-mails sent or received, in order to conserve network storage space.

All e-mails regarding BPHC business are public records and shall be stored or disposed of in accordance with BPHC records policy.