



City of Camarillo

CITY COUNCIL POLICY

Section: Information Technology

Date Adopted: September 24, 2008

Date Amended: December 13, 2023

Subject: **Email Retention**

Number: 12.02

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PURPOSE

To establish a policy for the proper retention of electronic mail (email) messages ensuring compliance with applicable State Laws.

POLICY

All emails maintained on City computers are potentially public records under California's Public Records Act, therefore the retention and disposition of emails should be in compliance with State Laws, the California Public Records Act, and the City of Camarillo adopted Records Retention Schedule.

The California Public Records Act (CPRA) defines a public record as, "any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics."

The CPRA requires the proper identification and management of emails, which are subject to the City's adopted Records Retention Schedule and should be retained and disposed of accordingly. Email is not considered an individual record series, and retention or disposition depends on the information contained, the purpose served, and the evaluation and categorization of each individual email.

A. Categories of Email:

Email falls within two broad categories: 1) transitory messages; and 2) public records of lasting value.

1. Transitory Messages

a. Identification. An email should be categorized as a "transitory message" when it:

- (1) Is a routine communication or information exchange.

- (2) Does not have lasting value and is not required to be kept in the normal course of business.
- (3) Does not document City business that should be preserved for future reference.
- (4) Conveys information of limited importance, in lieu of oral communication, and has very limited administrative value.

b. Retention: Per the California Public Records Act, transitory email may be deleted when the information is no longer needed for operational purposes and has limited historical significance or value.

2. Public Records of Lasting Value

a. Identification. An email should be classified as a “public record of lasting value” when it:

- (1) Has operational value such as:
 - a. administrative actions taken;
 - b. reports or operational manuals;
 - c. adopted policies, procedures, and guidelines;
 - d. needed to ensure continuity of operations.
- (2) Is required to be kept by law.
- (3) Has fiscal value or is required for financial reporting and audits.
- (4) Has historical significance.

b. Retention. Per the California Public Records Act, emails of lasting value should be retained for at least the minimum two-year period required under State Law and according to the City’s Records Retention Schedule.