



Are emails considered government records?

Yes, most email messages you send and receive will be government records. If an email message is **documenting the unique transaction of government business**, it is likely a record with retention requirements.

How long do I keep email?

It depends. Email is a record format. There is no single retention period for email, which is simply a medium used to transmit records. We classify records created and received via email into records series based on their content and function.

If an email only contains **transitory information** (records of temporary usefulness consisting of routine information used for communication), it may be deleted after it no longer has administrative value or after serving its purpose. Examples of transitory email include:

- Internal meeting notices
- Transmittals (e.g., "See attached.")
- Routine reminders (e.g., "Free tacos in the breakroom!")

Other common records series for email:

General Correspondence

Local Governments: GR1000-26b

State Agencies: 1.1.008

Public Information Requests

Local Governments: GR1000-34a/b

State Agencies: 1.1.020 / 1.1.021

Leave Requests

Local Governments: GR1050-54b

State Agencies: 3.4.007

Complaints

Local Governments: GR1000-24

State Agencies: 1.1.006

CAUTION: A government record with an expired retention period may not be destroyed if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, public information request, administrative review, or other action involving the record is open. Consult your records management policies and Records Management Officer before destroying any records.

How do I classify my emails?

Use the "[Three-Step Drill](#)" to sort emails in your inbox and sent folders. For each email message, answer the following three questions:

- 1. Is it a government record?**
Do the contents of the email conduct government business? Immediately delete spam, advertisements, or emails of a personal nature.
- 2. Is it my responsibility?**
Is the business being discussed requiring you to take action? If not, it might just be a convenience copy for you. Forward to the right person, if necessary, or delete.
- 3. Am I the custodian?**
Are you the designated person at your organization responsible for maintaining records related to the subject? Many times, but not always, the sender is the custodian.

Three-Step Drill

