

EMAIL GUIDELINES	PROCEDURE	
	Document Number:	AS-IT-PR-1007
	Version Number:	01

1.0 Purpose:

To establish uniform guidelines and procedures for the use of VTA's email system, and for the efficient management of VTA email as public records (including the security, retention, storage, preservation, and destruction of email communications).

2.0 Scope:

Email services are provided to VTA employees, vendors, contractors, and consultants in support of VTA business. Users of VTA's email services are expected to act in accordance with VTA's other policies and procedures regarding professional and personal courtesy and conduct. Email is to be used primarily as a business tool, and shall not be used for personal use, except that it may be used for occasional, incidental, and responsible personal use. This document and related policies, such as VTA's Electronic Media Policy (AS-IT-PL-5010) provide the framework in which all email services are to be provided and used at VTA.

All VTA employees, vendors, contractors, and consultants are responsible for information sent by them via their VTA email account, and may be held responsible for information sent to their VTA account. Official VTA business communication may be sent via email. VTA staff that does not have access to email will be provided alternate communication methods and tools.

3.0 Responsibilities:

Each department head shall enforce this procedure within his or her department. Every employee, consultant, contractor, and agent using VTA email and services is responsible for following this procedure.

4.0 Procedure:

4.1 Email Account

No one is to use another individual's VTA email account, unless appropriately delegated with or without permission.

Each VTA email account is assigned a limited space on the Exchange email server, which can only be increased with valid business justification. Users should not rely on email servers for the purposes of archiving or record retention. VTA has installed an Enterprise Vault (EV) solution that will automatically copy the document to the EV for longer-term storage.

4.1.1 When an employee separates from employment with VTA, the employee's email account will be locked and/or the password will be changed. Management has the

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right to review and extract information as required to perform VTA's business during and after an employee's employment.

4.1.2 Email accounts can be immediately locked upon the request of the department head, Protective Services or Employee Relations.

4.1.3 Email Passwords

- Individual email passwords have been combined with each employee's VTA Systems access password (NT password) and will be set to expire automatically at a frequent rate to ensure that passwords are being used appropriately.
- Users are to take precautions to prevent the unauthorized use of email account passwords. Passwords are not to be shared with others, and their confidentiality is to be strictly maintained. In choosing passwords, users should select codes that are difficult to guess and should change them on a regular basis. Users may be held accountable for all actions performed with their passwords, including those performed by other individuals as a result of user negligence in protecting passwords. Email administrators and other computer support staff will not ask you for your password.

4.1.4 Email Addresses

Email name addresses use the following format: firstname.lastname@VTA.ORG. These addresses are held for one year from the date of last use to avoid possible confusion of mail delivery. The email username will be withheld from general use for 15 years.

4.1.5 Email name addresses are generated from the user's legal name and must be unique. Duplicate names are resolved based an alternate name selected by the last affected user(s).

4.1.6 Email usernames and email name addresses may be changed when a user legally changes his or her name. Upon request, messages sent to the former email address may be forwarded for a period of ninety days. Requests for forwarding services must be made to the department email administrator thirty days prior to the effective date of the legal name change.

4.1.7 Group Email Addresses: Group Email Addresses can be created in order to send messages to numerous individual email addresses simultaneously. VTA management should assign a single responsible person to maintain a Group Email Address even though multiple individuals may have edit access to the account.

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Group Addresses are permitted as follows:

- 4.1.7.1 The division or department manager will determine when a group address is appropriate to conduct business and will be responsible for all account activities, including its use by authorized and unauthorized employees.
- 4.1.7.2 Use of Group Email Addresses should be used exclusively for VTA business. Unless otherwise authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer, announcements for donation requests or fundraisers, should be made via appropriate electronic bulletin boards or other means. Announcements for events such as promotions or retirements should be limited to the appropriate Group Address, i.e. a department Group, rather than an unnecessarily wider distribution. Use of Group Email Addresses must be approved by a division or department manager. The larger the distribution of a Group Email Address, such as an address for all VTA employees, the greater the degree of discretion required.
- 4.1.7.3 When sending a Group email, it is best to insert the address in the "bcc" (blind copy) field. This prevents persons responding to the email from unnecessarily responding to all addressees. If responding to an email sent as part of a Group Email, employees should avoid responding to all addressees via the "Reply to All" button.

4.2 Directory Policies

- 4.2.1 VTA publishes electronic directory information, including email addresses, for employees and consultants. Electronic directory services are provided in the VTA Online Directory and within employees' email browser. The VTA Online Directory is available for anyone within or outside of VTA to locate employees and consultants. Email may be sent directly from directory records. VTA electronic and printed directories are provided solely for the purpose of assisting individuals in contacting one another. Information in the directories may not be extracted for the creation of lists for use by organizations outside of VTA. Use of directory information for solicitation of business or donations is expressly prohibited.
- 4.2.2 Staff may request to remove work-related contact information, including work phone numbers, employee photo and work email address, from the online VTA directory or exchange server for valid reasons. Any personal contact information, including non-work address, non-work phone numbers, and other email addresses,

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would typically not be shown unless requested by the employee for emergency purposes.

4.3 Security, Privacy and Confidentiality

4.3.1 VTA cannot assure, and users should not assume, the security, privacy, and confidentiality of email. Users are advised not to send confidential VTA communications via email except as a password encrypted attachment. Examples of why email confidentiality cannot be assured are:

- 4.3.1.1 Email may be subject to disclosure under law.
- 4.3.1.2 Back-up copies may be retained for periods of time and in locations unknown to senders and recipients, even if the user has deleted it from his or her account or PC.
- 4.3.1.3 In the course of routine systems maintenance, troubleshooting and mail delivery problem resolution, network or systems staff may inadvertently see the content of email messages.
- 4.3.1.4 Password protections are advised but cannot be guaranteed.
- 4.3.1.5 Senders can mask their identities.
- 4.3.1.6 Messages can be forwarded easily and without permission to individuals or groups, even though this may violate copyright law.
- 4.3.1.7 Messages can be intercepted while in transit through the network.
- 4.3.1.8 Forwarded messages can be altered from the original.
- 4.3.1.9 Once a message is received on a machine outside VTA, all of the above concerns continue to apply.

4.3.2 The security, privacy, and confidentiality of email attachments can be enhanced if the user has properly encrypted the document prior to attaching the document to an email.

- 4.3.2.1 Encrypted documents require a password. The password should be at least 8 characters long or greater and include both upper and lower case characters plus a special character and/or numbers.

4.3.3 Each department shall maintain all records using records management practices that are suited to the particular needs of the department, and in accordance with the requirements of this procedure and VTA's Records Retention Schedule.

4.3.4 Any messages or information sent by an employee from a VTA electronic device to one or more individuals via an electronic network (e.g., bulletin board, online service, or Internet) are identifiable and attributable to VTA. While some users include personal "disclaimers" in electronic messages, there would still be a connection with the VTA and the statement might still be legally attributed to

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VTA. Communications must not disclose any confidential or proprietary VTA information.

- 4.3.5 Employees must respect the confidentiality of other people's electronic communications. Any attempt to read others' communications, "hack" into other systems or other people's logins, "crack" or disclose passwords, breach computer or network security measures, or monitor electronic files or communications of other employees or third parties is expressly prohibited.

4.4 Record Retention of an Email

- 4.4.1 For purposes of retention and disposition of VTA's email records, the Information Technology Department (IT) with the assistance of VTA General Counsel, shall develop, maintain, and distribute a Records Retention Schedule. The Retention Schedule shall list the time period that email records remain active in the individual departments and when, if ever, they are otherwise disposed of in the normal course of business.

- 4.4.2 Ownership of email records, all original email documents, writings, or other forms of information produced or acquired by employees in the course of their duties, belongs exclusively to VTA. Requests for such email records or attachments can be made through the California Public Records Act. Employees are to have no expectation of privacy for any document filing system, whether physical or electronic, used by themselves or other employees.

- 4.4.3 Managing vital email records: Vital email records are those records needed to continue or resume basic operations in the event of a disaster. Vital email records shall be identified as such on the Records Retention Schedule. Vital email records should be protected by doing one of the following:

4.4.3.1 Storing hard copies in a fireproof filing cabinet or area or in a locked vault, either on-or off-site.

4.4.3.2 IT staff providing daily system back-ups for email vital records that have been identified in the system as vital records.

4.4.3.3 Printing vital email records such as minutes, ordinances and resolutions, on acid-free paper.

4.4.3.4 For any clarification on terms used within this section, please refer to section 5 "definitions."

- 4.4.4 Managing historical email records: Historical email records are records that may be valuable to future researchers and that document accomplishments, changes and growth. Historical records shall be identified as such on the Records Retention Schedule. Historical email records shall be maintained within each department based on individual departmental procedures.

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4.4.5 Destruction of email:

- 4.4.5.1 An email that is noted as non-vital or non-critical to VTA business and that is not identified in the VTA Record Retention schedule can be destroyed when the email no longer has value to VTA. Storing non-valuable email in the primary email system or in the Enterprise Vault is discouraged.
- 4.4.5.2 Any email Record which has been retained by the Retention Schedule must be saved for the minimum retention period identified on the Retention Schedule and may be destroyed in accordance with the retention procedure.

5.0 Definitions:

Email account: An email account is the location where mail is actually delivered. It is a combination of a login *username* and *password* and disk space. A person may have several email accounts on different computers or email servers.

Email username: The actual name of the account as typed in at the *username* prompt when logging onto email.

Email name address: The *first.last@vta.org* address is the name address or alias. It is linked to a preferred email account but is not itself an account username. Rather, it is a permanent email alias. Use of the name address ensures that the email address will remain the same the whole time an employee remains at VTA.

Email delivery address: The *username@vta.org* address is the delivery address. Each email account has its own unique delivery address which can be given out to correspondents as one's email address. A person may opt to use the email name address in addition to or instead of the delivery address.

Preferred email account: If a person has more than one email account, he or she will need to select a preferred email account which should be the account that receives most mail from correspondents. The name address will be linked to the preferred email account for direct delivery.

Electronic documents: For electronic documents, VTA will follow the Uniform Electronic Transaction Act (UETA) and the Electronic Signature in Global and National Commerce Act (ESGNCA), and for documents requiring digital signature, VTA will comply with California Government Code Section 16.5, et seq. as defined in the Record Management procedure AS-IT-PR-5200

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Record: Any writing or block of information in an application or electronic document or paper document containing information relating to VTA business no matter if it was prepared, owned, used, or retained by VTA

6.0 Records:

Records Management Program Retention Schedule AS-IT-PR-5210.

VTA Electronic Equipment & media Policy AS-IT-PL-1005.

7.0 Appendices:

N/A.


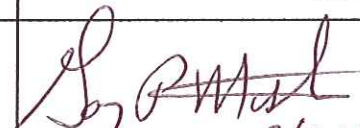
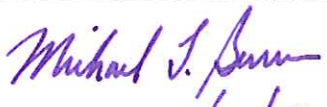
8.0 Training Requirements:

Specific training for managing email can be found on VTA web portal:
<http://vtaportal.vta.org/divisions/technology>.

9.0 Summary of Changes:

Initial release of this procedure.

10.0 Approval Information:

Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
 3/21/2013 Ann Mangiaracina Management Analyst	 3/21/2013 Gary Miskell Chief Information Officer	 3/20/13 Michael T. Burns General Manager