



Records & Information Management Service (RIMS)

Guidelines For Writing Email

Authority: AS 40.21 (Public Records Act) and 4 AAC 59 (Archives & Records)

This is a quick guide to the things that you should remember when writing an email as part of your duties with the State of Alaska.

Although email is frequently seen as an informal method of communicating due, in part, to its use for informal communication with friends, it should be regarded as a formal method of communication, on par with a formal business letter when used as part of your job.

Addressing

1. Only send the email to the people who need to either take further action or need to know the information that you are sending.
2. Only use the "To" field for those people who are required to take further action.
3. Use the "Cc" field for those people who only need information but are not required to undertake further action.
4. Ensure the email is properly addressed to all the relevant people.
5. Be careful before you hit the "Reply All" button - only do this if you really believe everyone needs to know your response.

Subject Line

1. Make sure the subject line is clear and is an accurate representation of what the email is about.

When conducting a conversation by email, please don't not keep using the same subject heading - this will only make it more difficult to find specific information later. Change the subject to reflect the content of the email you are sending.
3. Use flags to indicate whether the message is of "High Importance" or "Low Importance".

Structure, Grammar and Tone of the Message

1. Try to use plain English.
2. Be polite.
3. Use paragraphs to avoid large blocks of text.
4. Avoid using "text speak" e.g. l8r instead of later.
5. Avoid using emoticons.

6. Avoid using abbreviations unless everyone being sent the message understands this or if the abbreviation has been explained in a previous message or in the message you are about to send.
7. Try and avoid using CAPITAL letters.
6. Check the spelling before you send the email.

Who Do I Contact For More Information?

You can contact Gordon E. Brown, State Records Manager (gordon.brown@alaska.gov).