



# AMHERST COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## EMAIL ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

141-01 rev. 12/01/2010

*TYPE or clearly PRINT (in black ink)*

Email is a critical mechanism for business communications at the Amherst County Sheriff's Office, (ACSO). However, use of ACSO electronic mail system are a privilege, not a right, and therefore must be used with respect and in accordance with the goals of Amherst County Sheriff's Office and applicable law.

The objectives of this policy are to outline appropriate and inappropriate use of ACSO email system in order to minimize disruptions to services and activities, as well as comply with applicable policies and laws.

All ACSO related business and activities that can be conducted via email shall be conducted using the ACSO Email system. No one is authorized to conduct ACSO related business and/or activities through any other third party email services; i.e. Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo to name a few. This is to assure that the ACSO is in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the regulations governing the records retention and disposition of state and local public records.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all email systems and services operated by Amherst County Sheriff's Office, all email account users/holders at ACSO (both temporary and permanent), and all email records.

### **Account Activation/Termination**

Email access is controlled through individual accounts and passwords. Each user of ACSO email system is required to read and sign a copy of this **Email Acceptable Use Agreement** prior to receiving an email access account and password. It is the responsibility of the appointee to protect the confidentiality of their account and password information.

All fulltime appointees of ACSO will receive an email account.

Email access will be terminated when the appointee terminates their association with Amherst County Sheriff's Office, unless other arrangements are made. ACSO is under no obligation to store or forward the contents of an individual's email inbox/outbox after the term of their appointment has ceased.

### **General Expectations of End Users**

The Sheriff's Office often delivers official communications via email. As a result, appointees of ACSO with email accounts are expected to check their email in a consistent and timely manner so that they are aware of important Sheriff's Office announcements and updates, as well as for fulfilling business and role-oriented tasks.

Email users are responsible for mailbox management, including organization and cleaning. If a user subscribes to a mailing list, he or she must be aware of how to unsubscribe from the list, and is responsible for doing so in the event that their current email address changes.



Email users are expected to remember that email sent from the Sheriff's Office email accounts reflects on the Amherst County Sheriff's Office. All appointees shall comply with normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct.

### **Appropriate Use**

Individuals at ACSO are encouraged to use email to further the goals and objectives of Amherst County Sheriff's Office. The types of activities that are encouraged include:

- Communicating with fellow appointees, business partners of Amherst County Sheriff's Office, and clients within the context of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
- Acquiring or sharing information necessary or related to the performance of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
- Participating in educational or professional development activities.

### **Inappropriate Use**

ACSO email systems and services are not to be used for purposes that could be reasonably expected to strain storage or bandwidth (e.g. emailing large attachments instead of pointing to a location on a shared drive or Zipping a file). Individual email use will not interfere with others' use and enjoyment of ACSO email system and services. Email use at ACSO will comply with all applicable laws, all ACSO policies and procedures.

The following activities are deemed inappropriate uses of the ACSO email system and are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action:

- Use of email for illegal or unlawful purposes, including copyright infringement, obscenity, libel, slander, fraud, defamation, plagiarism, harassment, intimidation, forgery, impersonation, soliciting for illegal pyramid schemes, and computer tampering (e.g. spreading of computer viruses).
- Viewing pornography, or sending pornographic jokes or stories via email, is considered sexual harassment and will be addressed according to the sexual harassment policy.
- The sending, forwarding of chain letters, jokes or video.
- Use of email in any way that violates ACSO policies, rules, or administrative orders.
- Viewing, copying, altering, or deletion of email accounts or files belonging to ACSO or another individual without authorized permission.
- Sending of unreasonably large email attachments.



- Opening email attachments from unknown or unsigned sources. Attachments are the primary source of computer viruses and should be treated with utmost caution.
- Sharing email account passwords with another person, or attempting to obtain another person's email account password. Email accounts are only to be used by the registered user.
- Using the ACSO email resources for personal business or other un-official communications, the sending of unsolicited mass mailings, non-ACSO commercial activity, political campaigning, dissemination of chain letters, and use by non-appointees.

### **Monitoring and Confidentiality**

The email system used by the ACSO are leased by the Amherst County Sheriff's Office, and are therefore its property. This gives ACSO the right to monitor any and all email traffic passing through its email system. This monitoring may include, but is not limited to, inadvertent reading by personnel charged with the managing the email system, review by the legal team during the email discovery phase of litigation, observation by management in cases of suspected abuse or to monitor appointee efficiency, or to investigate internal affairs complaints.

In addition, archival and backup copies of email messages exist, despite end-user deletion, in compliance with ACSO and state records retention policy. The goals of these backup and archiving procedures are to ensure system reliability, prevent business data loss, meet regulatory and litigation needs, and to provide investigate internal affairs complaints.

Backup copies exist primarily to restore service in case of failure. Archival copies are designed for quick and accurate access by ACSO delegates for a variety of management and legal needs. Both backups and archives are governed by the ACSO's document retention policies and federal and state law. *These policies indicate that emails must be kept for at least 3 years.*

If ACSO discovers or has good reason to suspect activities that do not comply with applicable laws or this policy, email records may be retrieved and used to document the activity in the furtherance of an internal affairs investigation.

Use extreme caution when communicating confidential or sensitive information via email. Keep in mind that all email messages sent outside of ACSO become the property of the receiver. A good rule is to not communicate anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable being made public.

Demonstrate particular care when using the "Reply" command during email correspondence to ensure the resulting message is not delivered to unintended recipients.

### **Reporting Misuse**

Any allegations of misuse should be promptly reported to the Administration Division Commander. If you receive an offensive email, do not forward, delete, or reply to the message. Instead, report it directly to the individual named above.

### **Disclaimer**



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ACSO assumes no liability for direct and/or indirect damages arising from the user's use of ACSO email system. Users are solely responsible for the content they disseminate. ACSO is not responsible for any third-party claim, demand, or damage arising out of use the ACSO email systems or services.

**Failure to Comply**

Violations of this policy will be treated like other allegations of wrongdoing at Amherst County Sheriff's Office. Allegations of misconduct will be adjudicated according to established procedures. Sanctions for inappropriate use on ACSO email systems and services may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Temporary or permanent revocation of email access;
2. Disciplinary action according to applicable ACSO policies;
3. Termination of employment; and/or
4. Legal action according to applicable laws and contractual agreements.

**Email User Agreement**

I have read and understand the Email Acceptable Use Agreement. I understand if I violate the rules explained herein, I may face legal or disciplinary action according to applicable laws or Amherst County Sheriff's Office policy.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_