

Nueces County

Email Acceptable Use Policy

A. Purpose

Email accounts are a critical mechanism for business communications at *NUECES COUNTY*. However, use of *NUECES COUNTY*'s electronic mail systems and services are a privilege, not a right, and therefore must be used with respect and in accordance with the goals of *NUECES COUNTY*.

The objectives of this policy are to outline appropriate and inappropriate use of *NUECES COUNTY*'s *email* systems and services in order to minimize disruptions to services and activities, as well as comply with applicable policies and laws.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all *email* systems and services owned by *NUECES COUNTY*, all *email* account users/holders at *NUECES COUNTY* (both temporary and permanent), and all county *email* records.

C. Definitions

email - Electronic Mail System including calendar and contact information.

D. Governing Laws & Regulations

E. Policy Statements

1. *Email* access at *NUECES COUNTY* is controlled through individual accounts and passwords. Each user of *NUECES COUNTY*'s *email* system is required to read and sign a copy of this *email* acceptable use policy prior to receiving access to an *email* account and password. It is the responsibility of the employee to protect the confidentiality of their account and password information.
2. All employees of *NUECES COUNTY* will receive an *email* account. *Email* accounts will be granted to third-party non-employees on a case-by-case basis. Possible non-employees that may be eligible for access include:
 - Approved contractors
 - Approved state agencies
 - Approved local agencies
 - Approved volunteers

Applications for these temporary accounts must be submitted to the Information Technology department. All terms, conditions, and restrictions governing *email* use must be in a written and signed agreement.

3. *Email* access will be terminated when the employee, volunteer or third party terminates their association with *NUECES COUNTY*, unless other arrangements are made. *NUECES COUNTY* is under no obligation to store or forward the contents of an individual's *email* account after the term of their employment has ceased.

Nueces County

Email Acceptable Use Policy

4. *NUECES COUNTY* often delivers official communications via email. As a result, employees or volunteers of *NUECES COUNTY* with email accounts are expected to check their email in a consistent and timely manner so that they are aware of important county announcements and updates, as well as for fulfilling business and role-oriented tasks.
5. 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.
6. Email users are expected to remember that email sent from the county's email accounts reflects on the county. Normal standards of professional and personal courtesy and conduct are expected to be followed.
7. Email users are not to give the impression that they are representing or providing opinions on behalf of *NUECES COUNTY* unless otherwise authorized.
8. Email users will not set automatic forwarding of emails to accounts outside the control of *NUECES COUNTY*.
9. Individuals at *NUECES COUNTY* are encouraged to use email to further the goals and objectives of *NUECES COUNTY*. The types of activities that are encouraged include:
 - i. Communicating with fellow employees, volunteers, business partners of *NUECES COUNTY*, and the public within the context of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
 - ii. Acquiring or sharing information necessary or related to the performance of an individual's assigned responsibilities.
 - iii. Participating in educational or professional development activities.
10. *NUECES COUNTY*'s 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). Individual email use will not interfere with others' use and enjoyment of *NUECES COUNTY*'s email system and services.
11. Email use at *NUECES COUNTY* will comply with all applicable laws, all *NUECES COUNTY* policies, and all *NUECES COUNTY* contracts. Use in a manner that is not consistent with the mission of *NUECES COUNTY*, misrepresents *NUECES COUNTY* or violates any *NUECES COUNTY* policy/rule is prohibited.
12. The following activities are deemed inappropriate uses of *NUECES COUNTY* email systems and services, and are strictly prohibited. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. Use of email to commit illegal or unlawful acts, including but not limited to; 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).
 - ii. Use of email in any way that violates *NUECES COUNTY*'s policies, rules, or administrative orders.
 - iii. Viewing, copying, altering, or deletion of email accounts or files belonging to *NUECES COUNTY* or another individual without authorized permission.
 - iv. Sending of unreasonably large email attachments. The total size of an individual email message sent (including attachment) will be set by the Information Technology Director.
 - v. Opening email attachments from unknown or unsigned sources. Attachments are the primary source of computer viruses and should be treated with utmost caution.

Nueces County

Email Acceptable Use Policy

- vi. 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.
 - vii. Excessive personal use of *NUECES COUNTY* email resources. *NUECES COUNTY* allows limited personal use for communication with family and friends, independent learning, and public service so long as it does not interfere with staff productivity, pre-empt any business activity, or consume more than a trivial amount of resources. *NUECES COUNTY* prohibits personal use of its email systems and services for unsolicited mass mailings, non-*NUECES COUNTY* commercial activity, political campaigning, dissemination of chain letters, and use by non-employees.
13. The email systems and services used at *NUECES COUNTY* are owned by the county, and are therefore its property. This gives *NUECES COUNTY* the right to monitor any and all traffic passing through its email system. This monitoring may include, but is not limited to, inadvertent reading by IT staff during the normal course of 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 employee efficiency.
 14. Archival and backup copies of email messages may exist, despite end-user deletion, in compliance with *NUECES COUNTY*'s 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 business intelligence.
 15. If *NUECES COUNTY* 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 accordance with due process. All reasonable efforts will be made to notify an employee if his or her email records are to be reviewed. Notification may not be possible, however, if the employee cannot be contacted, as in the case of employee absence due to vacation.
 16. Use extreme caution when communicating confidential or sensitive information via email. Keep in mind that all email messages sent outside of *NUECES COUNTY* become the property of the receiver. Consider not communicating anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable being made public. Demonstrate particular care when using the "Reply All" command during email correspondence to ensure the resulting message is not delivered to unintended recipients.
 17. Any allegations of misuse should be promptly reported to the individual employee's Department Head/Elected Official. If you receive an offensive email, do not forward, delete, or reply to the message. Instead, report it directly to the Department Head/Elected Official.
 18. *NUECES COUNTY* assumes no liability for direct and/or indirect damages arising from the user's use of *NUECES COUNTY*'s email system and services. Users are solely responsible for the content they disseminate. *NUECES COUNTY* is not responsible for any third-party claim, demand, or damage arising out of use of *NUECES COUNTY*'s email systems or services.

F. Non-Compliance

Nueces County

Email Acceptable Use Policy

Revision History

Version ID	Date of Change	Author	Rationale