

Are Emails Considered Public Records?

Yes. Most email messages you send and receive through your government email account or while doing government work will be Public Records. If it **documents the transaction of government business**, and it's not a duplicate of information someone else is responsible for preserving, it's a Public Record.

How Long Do I Keep Email?

Email is a format in which records can be stored, not a Record Series (a group of records with the same subject matter and retention requirements). Format does not dictate retention, so there is no single answer to how long to retain an email.

However, we *can* tell you the most common categories:

Email That Can Be Deleted Immediately

Personal emails: delete or move personal emails elsewhere as soon as possible.

Non-Record Materials: advertisements, publications from outside your agency/office, mailing list messages.

Duplicates: identical copies of the same email, mass emails that you didn't send and are not expected to answer (e.g. a policy announcement from your agency director that was sent to all staff).

Transitory Information: internal meeting notices, routine office discussion that doesn't involve specific work. (Such as: "There are cookies in the break room.")

The Most Common Email Record Series

Any email discussing a topic specific to your work may fall under a corresponding Record Series on an agency/office retention schedule, or on the *General Retention Schedule* for [State](#) or [County/Local](#) government.

However, *most* email that is actually a government record tends to fall under one of these two pairs of General Retention Schedule Record Series:

[GRADM-3](#) (state) and [GEN 10-03](#) (county/local):

Correspondence of Directors, Deputy Directors, and other policy-making positions - [Transfer to the Indiana Archives after 3 years.](#)

[GRADM-4](#) (state) and [GEN 10-04](#): (county/local): General correspondence - [Destroy after 3 years.](#)

How Do I Classify My Emails?

For each email message, answer the following two questions:

1. Is it a Public Record?

2. Is it my responsibility?

- If you were the sender: yes.
- If you participated in the conversation: yes.

UNLESS: there is a designated person in the agency responsible for retaining all records on this topic, and the email has been sent to that person.

- If there's a dedicated person and it's *you*: yes.

Flowchart:

