

INFORMATION PAPER

AHRC-PDD-R

07 March 2005

SUBJECT: Electronic Mail (e-mail)

1. PURPOSE. Provide information on managing and preserving e-mail identified as records.

2. BACKGROUND. E-mail has become a major way of transacting government business; however, many e-mails are being destroyed prematurely because they are not being perceived as official records. There is sufficient policy in place to protect valuable Army information transmitted via e-mail. We must ensure that all Army personnel are aware of this policy. This document outlines a few options.

3. FACTS:

a. E-mail messages are records when created or received in the transaction of public business and retained as evidence of official policies, actions, decisions, or transactions.

b. E-Mail records include: policies and directives; correspondence or memoranda related to official business; work schedules and assignments; agendas and minutes of meetings; drafts of documents that are circulated for comment or approval; any document that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction; and final reports or recommendations.

c. E-mail non-records include: personal messages and announcements not related to official business; copies of extracts of documents distributed for convenience or reference; and announcements of social events, such as retirement parties or holiday celebrations.

d. E-mail records must be identified, managed, protected and retained as long as needed for ongoing operations, audits, legal proceedings, or research IAW AR 25-400-2 and the retention schedules in ARIMS RRS-A (<https://www.arims.army.mil>).

(1) The record copy of records with retentions longer than 6 years are designated as transfer ("T") records under AR 25-400-2. These records are to be transferred via the ECS (electronic capture and store) to the ARIMS AEA (Army electronic archive) records repository where they are managed and disposed of at the end of their life cycle or transferred to the National Archives.

(2) Records with retentions of six years or less are designated as keep (“K”) records under AR 25-400-2 and are to be managed locally through their life cycle. This includes both hard-copy and electronic records. Electronic “K” records may be managed and stored within the office area on a separate hard drive, in shared folders on a local LAN identified for that purpose, or an organizational repository. The records must be accessible to authorized persons throughout the records life, maintained for as long as required, and organized to facilitate the destruction of the records on schedule. The system used should be standardized and consistent throughout the organization and made part of the regular conduct of business.

(3) Setting up local repositories, shared folders or installing a certified records management application (RMA) for managing your short term records requires the close coordination with, and installation by, your local IT shop and systems administrators. Besides building a location for the files, access requirements and periodic review procedures would have to be developed to ensure proper management and safeguarding of sensitive (e.g. privacy act) record information.

4. OPTIONAL PROCEDURES

a. “T” Records: As mentioned, policy requires “T” records be saved IAW AR 25-400-2 using the ARIMS web-based tools. These records should not be sent to ARIMS until they are completed actions or the “event” has occurred on those records that have time/event dispositions. ARIMS provides the flexibility for every action officer to transmit “T” records to the AEA. However, some agencies prefer that records be passed to a designated records coordinator or records manager so that they can do the transfer. This provides the records officers with some control over what their agency submits to ARIMS. In this case, it may be preferable for an office to set up “folders” (based on the Office Records List) for both their “T” and “K” records, on a local server. The records coordinator/manager would manage these files and send the “T” records to ARIMS as required.

b. “K” Records: ARIMS was designed to accept and manage only the “important”, long-term records created by the Army. It was determined that the short term records are better managed at the local level. For an office to manage their short term day to day business records, options that can be used include:

(1) The office can acquire a certified Records Management Application (RMA) and have it installed on their local computers. There are contracts already in place for the purchase of these applications.

(2) Set up shared folders on a local server based on the office records list. Action officers can “drag and drop” records (email and/or other electronic “K” records) into the appropriate folders. Office records coordinators, IAW

established periodic review procedures, would ensure folders are updated every year and records up for destruction are destroyed at the appropriate time.

(a) Folders can be labeled in a manner that best suits your individual agency/office. Generally, the more people using the folders, the more information should be placed up front to avoid confusion.

(b) Folders can be labeled with or without file numbers

(c) Years can be calendar or fiscal depending on which calendar your organization uses for its business.

(d) Titles can be the “official” ARIMS titles or shortened at your discretion.

(e) Records containing Privacy info should be safeguarded by incorporating access restrictions.

“Drag and Drop”

