# Security Spotlight

*An Informational Guide for Securitas USA Clients and Employees*

# Email Etiquette Basics

In the modern working environment one item we all utilize and at the same time take absolutely for granted is email.  The first one was transmitted June 8, 1971 and since then trillions of emails have been sent.   And one recurring question that constantly comes up, "What is proper email etiquette at work?"  It is important to utilize your work email for work related items.  Any emails that are, by their nature, personal should be sent from your personal email account, on your own  time. Common sense should be the primary rule of thumb in this area.

It is highly recommended to ask yourself two questions when preparing a work email.  First, "Is it inappropriate?" and second, "Will it offend anyone?"  If you can answer yes to either or you are not sure then err on the side of caution and do not click that send button.  Assume that everything you write could end up on the front cover of a newspaper or in a court of law.  If you are writing an email that you would not want your boss or coworkers to read, or your client for that matter, then do not send it.  There are several types of email messages that you should never ever send from your work email.  They are:

• Negative Messages - talking bad about your boss, clients, or coworkers could create lasting problems for you

• Jokes - there are countless cases where even forwarding a joke have gotten people in trouble and in some instances fired from their job

• Explicit messages/pictures - do not send anything that is sexual in any form, for any reason

• Chain letters - NEVER EVER, forward chain letters. Sorry, but Bill Gates is not going to send you $10,000 if you forward that email to ten people in five minutes

• Personal Information - if you are a supervisor or manager keep all employee's information private because evaluations, salary, and even Social Security numbers could end up around the office or on the internet

IS IT REALLY GONE WHEN DELETING IT?

Another  question that keeps coming up in the email realm, "Is that email really deleted?"  The short answer is it is not gone.  Yes, it might be removed from your inbox, but there are in fact other places that the email is probably sitting.

First, if you sent it, most people forget that the recipient could still possess that email in their inbox. Second, if you deleted it, the email is probably sitting in your waste basket. Most people do not have their trash bin on auto delete, so the discarded items sit there until the computer needs space and deletes them. Third, there is also a copy of the email in the sent folder. Finally, in most modern email systems, many companies have their emails auto-archived so that with a click of a button they can be recovered. This makes it virtually impossible not to find or recover lost emails.

So why make this public? The answer is two-fold. First, be aware that if you need to recover lost data, letters, or information that was contained in a deleted email there is hope. Second, be aware that if you do send inappropriate or questionable items they can in fact be recovered by the company. Hence, your emails could end up being subpoenaed as evidence by a court and possibly be used against the client, you, and even Securitas. The effects of all this could cost you your job and hurt your reputation.

EMAIL TIPS

Since email is such an integral aspect of effectively conducting our jobs it is worth noting proper steps to take when using email. Below are some quick tips to consider:

• Write in proper English, utilizing spell check (please note: spell check does not always catch everything), proper grammar, and language

• Keep opinions to a minimum, this is not a forum to vent your frustrations

• Do not type in all caps, that is YELLING in an email

• If replying to an email with multiple recipients, carefully decide if you want to 'Reply to All' or 'Reply' to just the sender of the email

• Email is not texting or instant messaging, people will judge you on your writing style and lack of professionalism

• When there is a misunderstanding or miscommunication by email, speak to that individual via phone or, if possible, in person

• Be cautious with including humor in the content of an email, it can get lost in translation and backfire

• When writing an email, add the address to where you are sending it last, so that you do not accidentally send it before finishing typing or attaching a document

• Add a topic, the first item the recipient will usually view is the subject line, to help them determine the importance of the email

• Greetings and send-offs, you should never begin with the contents of an email, and always finish by saying "Thanks" and your name, to practice good email etiquette

• Make sure your message is simple and clear, keeping an email shorter makes viewing them easier on handheld devices, like mobile phones or tablets

• Respond to emails in a timely manner, its just good business practice, and the sender is looking for a response or they would not have sent it in the first place

• Use an "out of office" reply to show the sender that you are on vacation or in training and will not be returning emails in a timely manner, be sure to also state who to contact in your absence

CONCLUSIONS

Remember, if you use a common sense approach to email then you will not have anything to worry about. In this day and age of social media and digital technology keep your professional and private lives separate and clear. There should definitely be no gray areas...

So remember if you would never say it to someone's face then do not send it to their email!

*Integrity Vigilance Helpfulness*