



# Agency Correspondence

Section: 1.458  
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## **1.458 Agency Correspondence**

### **1.458.02 Communications Systems**

- A. The agency utilizes various communications systems for the mutual benefit of the agency and its employees. Those communications systems include, but are not limited to:
1. Telephones and facsimile (FAX) devices;
  2. Email systems and internet access;
  3. Voice and video recorders and players;
  4. Radio and paging systems;
  5. Bulletin boards; and
  6. Other miscellaneous locations where documents, paper mail, and messages are posted, retained, or stored.
- B. All agency employees are responsible for the efficient, effective, ethical, and lawful use of the agency's communications systems.
- C. Consistent with CJ 10-402 and applicable case law, employees have only limited expectations of privacy from intrusion when using electronic communications systems that are agency authorized or are provided for the mutual benefit of employees and the agency.
- D. Agency employees will not access communications intended solely for other employees or persons unless required or requested to do so by intended recipients, as authorized by lawful processes, or for bona fide, work related reasons. Applicable statutes include, but are not limited to:
1. CR 8-606 - False entry in public record, altering, defacing, destroying, removing or concealing public record; accessing public record;
  2. CR 7-302 - Unauthorized access to computers prohibited;
  3. CR 3-905 - Opening letters without permission;
  4. CR 3-804, CR 3-805, CR 8-210, CR 9-602, and CR 9-603 pertaining to surveillance, telephone misuse, etc.; and
  5. CJ 10-401 thru 10-414 - Wiretapping and electronic surveillance.
- E. All agency communications will be in English unless specifically authorized by the Captain or University Administration for use by non-English speaking recipients.
- F. Encryption programs will not be used unless specifically authorized by the Captain OTS or HR.
- G. Classified, confidential, sensitive, proprietary, or private information or data will not be disseminated to unauthorized persons, organizations, or agencies.

- H. Except in the furtherance of bona fide police duties, agency employees will not utilize correspondence or communications systems to:
1. Violate the University's Guidelines for the Acceptable Use of Computing Resources;
  2. Send messages that threaten, harass, or intimidate others;
  3. Send images that contain nudity, images or words of a prurient or sexually suggestive nature, even if recipients have consented to or requested such material;
  4. Send unbecoming communications; or
  5. Send communications in violation of laws or directives, including, but not limited to:
    - a. The UB Policy on Sexual Harassment;
    - b. The UB Human Relations Code; or
    - c. CR 10-304 - Religious and ethnic crimes.

**1.458.04 Electronic Mail**

- A. The university maintains and operates an email system as a primary means of facilitating official agency communications and actions.
- B. Agency correspondence conducted via email carries the same effect and importance as hard copy correspondence.
- C. Emails must conform to the same efficiency, effectiveness, ethical, and lawful standards as hard copy correspondence.
- D. The secondary purposes of the agency's email network are to encourage and facilitate intra-agency communications.
- E. All employees, per university policy are responsible for reading their e-mail on a "frequent and regular basis". Since information is critical all officers and staff are to check their mail **at least once each tour of duty**.

**1.458.06 Correspondence Referrals From the Office of the Captain**

- A. Correspondence received by the Office of the Captain is tracked and accounted for consistent with acceptable business practices.
- B. When appropriate, Correspondence Referrals will be attached to correspondence sent from the Office of the Captain to subordinate commands within the agency. Referrals will be used to indicate:
  1. The subject of correspondence;
  2. To whom the correspondence is directed;
  3. Assigned suspense dates and actual completion dates; and
  4. The actions to be taken with respect to the correspondence.

**1.458.08 Correspondence Directed to Superiors**

- A. All routine correspondence originating from subordinate commands and directed to superiors will be prepared in a standard intra-agency memorandum format (hard copy or email) and be staffed through Sergeants/OIC's.

- B. Unit commanders are responsible for reviewing, commenting on, and endorsing (either positively or negatively) correspondence submitted to them prior to forwarding the correspondence through the chain of command.
- C. Once correspondence has been initiated, it should be endorsed and forwarded to the next level within five working days. When requested by a superior, the endorsement will contain an accurate, factual reason for any delays.
- D. Correspondence endorsements will be in the same form (hard copy or email) as the original correspondence.
  - 1. Hard copy endorsements will be attached to the front of the original correspondence.
  - 2. Correspondences reviewed without endorsements are not acceptable.
  - 3. Correspondences marked "approved" are acceptable only if reviewing superiors are satisfied with the content and quality of the work and are willing to accept the document as if it were their own.
  - 4. Suggestions and opinions submitted into the chain of command at any level, having the final destination of the Office of the Captain, must have full recommendations from all unit commanders performing reviews.
- E. Recipients of correspondence will provide a timely response as necessary and appropriate to originators via the chain of command.
- F. Personnel submitting correspondence utilizing the chain of command may submit courtesy copies for informational purposes, with "cc" indicated thereon, directly to the Captain. The Captain will not normally specifically address subject matter contained therein until the correspondence has been staffed through the chain of command.

#### **1.458.10 Transfer Requests**

- A. Requests for transfer will generally be prepared, submitted, and responded to similar to all other agency correspondence directed to superiors. Transfer requests should be submitted by email with all persons in employee's chains of command receiving courtesy copies. Transfer requests may be submitted as hard copy documents.
- B. Transfer requests should contain information that includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Employee's current assignments;
  - 2. Positions to which employees wish to be reassigned; and
  - 3. Reasons for transfer requests and/or special skills, knowledge, and abilities that may be utilized in proposed assignments.

#### **1.458.12 Personal or Confidential Correspondence**

- A. Personal or confidential correspondence may be directed to a higher level of command without being staffed through the chain of command.
- B. The intent of allowing personal or confidential correspondence to be directed to a higher level of command is to insure that the lines of communication between the Captain, command ranked officers, and all personnel are maintained.

- C. Personal or confidential correspondence directed to a higher level of command will be prepared in a standard intra-agency memorandum format (hard copy or email).
  - 1. Hard copy correspondence will be placed in an envelope, addressed to the intended recipient, marked "Personal" or "Confidential," and placed in the recipient's mail distribution box.
  - 2. Email correspondence will have subjects listed as "Personal" or "Confidential" and sent to intended recipients.
  - 3. The first paragraph of personal or confidential correspondence to a higher level of command will contain an explanation of why the correspondence needed to be routed outside the chain of command.
- D. The process of corresponding directly with a higher level of command outside the chain of command will not be used to circumvent agency directives or practices regarding the chain of command in routine matters.

#### **1.458.14 Preparing Agency Correspondence**

In keeping with the University Policy on Inclusive Language, agency correspondence will be written in a style intended to be as bias free as possible, thereby reflecting the diversity of our community.

#### **1.458.16 Correspondence Protocol**

- A. Any correspondence going to directors, chiefs, and CEOs of any agencies, departments, internal or external organizations, etc., will be drafted for the signature of the Captain.
- B. Correspondence written over the Captain's signature to another police agency will always be addressed to the CEO of the other agency.
- C. Employees with duty assignments or responsibilities that involve normal or routine contact and correspondence outside the agency may do so, so long as the correspondence is within the limits and scope of the employee's normal or routine duties and in accordance with this directive.

#### **1.458.18 Official and Honorary Titles or Positions**

- A. When persons are serving in acting capacities, the word "acting" precedes the title in the inside address, but not in the salutation.
- B. Persons who have held positions entitling them to be addressed as "The Honorable" continue to retain that title after retirement.
- C. Retired members of military services retain their titles, but with their retirement status indicated, e.g., Admiral J. P. Jones, U.S.N., Retired.

#### **1.458.20 Mailing Services**

- A. Outgoing U.S. Mail will be forwarded or brought to the agency's out-going mail box and placed in the appropriate section for pick up.
- B. Campus mail will be forwarded or brought to the agency's out-going mail box and placed in the appropriate section for pick up. Confidential or limited access correspondence may be forwarded in sealed, plain brown envelopes. All other materials and/or correspondence will be forwarded in reusable mailing envelopes currently in university inventory.

C. Intra-agency mail will be placed by the sender or a designate in the receiver's agency mail slot.