

E-mail Safety & Etiquette

Excerpt from Starbridge Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources Policy –

Electronic Mail Usage: Agents of Starbridge are required to use e-mail appropriately. It is important to note that electronic mail is not a secure transmission method. Confidential data must be encrypted using Starbridge E-Mail Encryption instructions when e-mailing to addresses outside the agency. Only email sent between xxx@starbridgeinc.org email addresses are confidential and secured by our network without encryption. All electronic mail messages are property of Starbridge.

Email is a very common method for SPAM propagation, virus and malware infections. Remember to use caution when opening email messages:

- NEVER click on a link in an email you receive from someone you don't know.
- NEVER download pictures in an email message from someone you don't know.
- NEVER unsubscribe to an email from an online vendor you don't know.
- NEVER open links sent via email from social media sites like Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, etc. If something you were sent via email interests you, login to your social media account directly and accept the invitations or view the content directly from within your account.
- REMEMBER the @starbridgeinc.org email account is a business account and not for personal use. Only use the @starbridgeinc.org email address on social media sites when there is a business related purpose - not personal.

Make sure email is the right communication tool. Although email is easy to use, it may not be the best method of communication. It does not guarantee an immediate or prompt response. It can sometimes take more time to write an email than it would to speak to someone directly. It can also be difficult to convey feelings or explain complex topics in an email.

Be diplomatic and calm. If you have a concern, have a face to face conversation. Criticism is always harsher when written, and e-mail can be easily forwarded. Don't reply to any email while you're still angry (this is called "flaming"). You may have misunderstood what was meant. Remember your response can also be misunderstood and you may want to have a face to face conversation.

Do not forward junk mail, chain letters, jokes.... Per the Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources policy. Refer to the complete policy in LDA Network Resources\General\LDA Policies & Procedures Library\Technology Policies & Procedures.

Address your messages carefully. Send email only to the people who need to receive it. Do not use Allstaff, other mail lists or carbon copy (cc) to send messages indiscriminately. Reading or deleting unwanted email messages is a very big waste of time. For example: When a message is sent to All Staff (with 100 individuals on the list), it takes approximately 15 seconds to open, read and delete the message. This adds up to 25 minutes agency wide. If even one person responds with Reply All, that becomes a total of 50 minutes agency wide for one message that was not relevant to the recipients.

Summarize the subject. Never leave the subject line blank. Summarize your message in the subject line but be specific. Some email systems will filter out messages as junk mail based upon the words in the subject line.

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Write carefully. Once you send an e-mail message, you cannot take it back or make it disappear. The reality is that your messages may be saved for a very long time. They may also be read inadvertently by others, or forwarded to others without your knowledge. Any form of harassment via email whether through language, frequency, or size of messages is unacceptable per the Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources policy. Refer to the complete policy in LDA Network Resources\General\LDA Policies & Procedures Library\Technology Policies & Procedures.

Be brief. Don't include background images, pictures, animations, etc. unless they are critical to your message.

Use upper and lowercase text. Using all uppercase letters means SHOUTING and can be offensive.

Sign your messages with at least your name. It's nice to add your e-mail address, too, since some e-mail programs make it difficult to see who the sender of the message was.

Use Reply instead of Reply All. Use Reply All ONLY when all recipients of the original message should receive your response. Reply will respond only to the original sender and helps keep the amount of email we all receive down to what's most relevant to us.

Respect confidentiality and copyrights. Only E-mail messages sent to other ____@starbridgeinc.org email accounts are protected and secured by our network. Use the LDA Email Encryption instructions to send an encrypted email containing confidential information to individuals outside the agency. Email is also included in the types of works that can be copyrighted.

Limit size of attachments. Keep attachments as small as possible. Large attachments sent to email outside the agency will slow down our internet and adversely affect our remote offices.

Watch out for viruses in attached files. Attached files are a common way to spread computer viruses. If you don't know why you got an attachment, contact the sender directly to verify that it is what it appears to be. Some viruses can attach themselves without the sender even knowing it; some can hide where they actually came from.