Physical Operations Appendix 9.1

Email Guidelines

The number one rule is that e-mail is for routine rather than emergency correspondence. If something is a real emergency, it should be handled by phone.

Subject Line:

- Make sure that the subject line is descriptive of the topic in the message. This will make it easier to find it later if you need to or to scan your mail quickly.
- If you need an immediate response, use the High Importance tag (use this strategy sparingly.)

Body of the E-mail:

- E-mails are intended for short information bites and not for long discussions.
- Discussions, brainstorming, problem solving, and conflict resolution are for face-to-face meetings, not e-mail.
- Do not read emotion into e-mails. E-mails are often responded to quickly and bluntly compared to a personal conversation. Topics that have the potential of being emotionally charged are not for the internet.
- Consider using bullet points in your e-mail if you are addressing more than a couple of topics or have several questions for the recipient to answer.
- If you are generating the e-mail, reread it to be sure that it is providing enough information that the reader can understand your point or question. A brief intro of the topic can help for example, “Regarding my schedule”, “For our next meeting”, etc.

Replying to Messages:

- When to "reply to all": If the message was sent to a group, and the sender is asking for opinions from all, use the reply all. If your reply is not of interest to others or does not add to the original message, only reply to the sender. This will reduce the number of messages the others receive.
- If you Bcc a large group of recipients instead of adding them to the To line of the email, any “reply all” responses will only go to you as the sender.
- When responding to a list of issues or questions, say "see below" and respond to each one listed in the body of the message you received.

Forwarding E-mail:

- When forwarding a message, be sure that you have permission to forward the information from the original sender.
- It may be that only a portion of the e-mail is appropriate to forward. Edit the message before forwarding.

Distribution Lists:

- The School has a set of distribution lists available for use.
- If you use an established list, but not all recipients need to be included on the e-mail, remove the names for which the message is not intended.

- Limit the use of “CSD Everyone” to communications that are of importance to everyone in the School.

What are etiquette rules?

- There are many etiquette guides and many different etiquette rules. Some rules will differ according to the nature of your business and the corporate culture. Here is a video of 26 email etiquette rules and how to follow them.

General Guidelines:

- Do not overuse Reply to All
- Do not overuse the high priority option and avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT
- Do not copy a message or attachment without permission
- Use a professional email address that easily identifies you
- Don't forward virus hoaxes and chain letters
- Don't reply to spam
- If you’re unsure whether an email is spam, forward it to abuse@memphis.edu. The people in IT will let you know if the email is legitimate or not.
- Process your emotions before responding or hitting ‘send’
- Give recipient time to respond – at least 24 work hours

Content:

- Use a meaningful subject line
- Be concise and to the point
- Make it personal, but use humor carefully
- Answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions
- Add disclaimers to your emails
- Does not use email to discuss confidential information (use the phone)
- Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks
- Read the email before you send it
- Check recipient’s name

Format:

- Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation
- Take care with abbreviations and emoticons
- Use active instead of passive voice when you write
- Keep your language gender neutral
- Use proper structure & layout
- Avoid long, complex sentences
- Avoid difficult to read fonts
- Do not write in CAPITALS
- Include the message thread
- Do not attach unnecessary files
- Include a signature to professional emails

Reference: