



# Hays County

## Email Policy

Effective January 1, 2019

### Purpose

Hays County provides email addresses and capability to its employees who use computers in order to conduct County business internally and externally. The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines and expectations for use of County email addresses and use of County time to send/receive/respond/act on those emails.

This policy goes into effect immediately upon adoption by the Commissioners Court.

### Policy

A County email address must be used only for conducting official County business and not for any personal use.

1. Any employee who is authorized to use Internal Group Emails, such as but not limited to Everyone, Department Heads and/or Elected Officials, must have those emails approved beforehand by that employee's Office/Department head, unless that Office/Department head has given that specific employee authority to issue emails on his/her behalf. The Office/Department head, as well as the employee, will be considered responsible for the content of the email. All County emails, except those exempted by law, are subject to Open Records requests. It is the responsibility of each Elected Official/Department Head to ensure that all employees under his/her supervision are aware of, understand, and adhere to this policy.
2. While Hays County acknowledges that employees will occasionally use County email to communicate internally and externally with business associates in the spirit of camaraderie and teamwork, employees are cautioned to refrain from sending any material that could be considered offensive to any person.
3. Internal and external emails should reflect County business or be directly related to County business or employees. For instance, announcing information about or benefits for County employees or their immediate relatives (as defined by Human Resources policies) are acceptable; information about or benefits for non-profit organizations funded fully or in part by the Hays County Commissioners Court are acceptable; information about or benefits for private business, organizations, schools, etc., are not acceptable. When sharing information about a co-worker or co-worker's family member, ensure that person has authorized the sharing of the information.
4. Employees shall obey all local, state and federal laws, including but not limited to the Hatch Act when using County email. Specifically, employees should avoid content that includes:
  - a. Profane language or content,
  - b. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance,

- national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation,
- c. Sexual content or links to sexual content,
- d. Solicitations of commerce,
- e. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity,
- f. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems, or
- g. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

5. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.