

CITY OF SAN DIEGO
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

SUBJECT BROADCAST E-MAIL AND VOICE MAIL	Number 90.65	Issue 1	Page 1 of 6
	Effective Date December 6, 1999		

PREAMBLE

The use of e-mail and voice mail in city government creates a great opportunity for quick and low-cost communications reaching many employees. At the same time, it places a new responsibility on employees to use these mediums effectively and fairly. This administrative regulation is intended to help teach how to use broadcast messages, in combination with traditional communications tools, to effectively provide information to large numbers of City employees. It is also intended to create recognition that broadcast e-mail is really a Citywide publication, printed electronically, with a limited distribution. For example, City employees without e-mail service do not receive information that e-mail users obtain from broadcast e-mail. Using broadcast e-mail without using other means to inform non-users, restricts, rather than expands, the reach of the information sent. Thinking about broadcast e-mail in this way provides a frame of reference with which to understand this administrative regulation.

1. Purpose
 - 1.1 To establish an efficient system for approving broadcast messages to be sent on the City's e-mail and voice mail systems,
 - 1.2 To avoid overburdening network system capacities,
 - 1.3 To encourage alternative, more broad-based means of information distribution,
 - 1.4 To ensure employees who do not have access to e-mail and/or voice mail are not unfairly denied access to information, and
 - 1.5 To avoid losses in productivity or efficiency due to delays caused by listening to or reading inappropriate broadcast messages.

Authorized

(Signed by Michael T. Uberuaga)

CITY MANAGER

(Signed by Ed Ryan)

AUDITOR & COMPTROLLER

(Signed by Casey Gwinn)

CITY ATTORNEY

(Signed by Rich Snapper)

PERSONNEL DIRECTOR

(Signed by Charles G. Abdelnour)

CITY CLERK

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2. Scope

2.1 This regulation applies to all City managerial and non-managerial department employees, consultants, volunteers, special committee members, and other affiliates who use the City of San Diego's e-mail and voice mail systems in the performance of their City-related job duties.

2. Definitions

3.1 E-mail is the electronic transfer of messages, memoranda, and attached documents from a sender to one or more recipients via an external telecommunication service.

3.2 Voice mail is a message left on the City's automated telephone answering system that can be sent to and retrieved by one or more telephone users.

3.3 "Broadcast message" means a general announcement sent indiscriminately via e-mail or voice mail to multiple recipients, rather than a specific message sent to a group of pre-identified individuals. Examples of pre-identified groups of individuals include a workgroup, a committee, or a specifically developed e-mail distribution list consisting of individuals known to be part of or interested in a City subject or organization. An example of an indiscriminate broadcast message would be distribution of a notice about an event to all e-mail users in hopes some would attend.

3.4 "Emergency" means an unforeseeable event or condition requiring prompt action that could affect all or many voice mail or e-mail users.

4. General Policy

4.1 The use of broadcast voice mail and e-mail is important to effective communications in the City.

4.2 Broadcast messages should be clear, simple, and focused. They should end with a way to obtain more information.

4.3 It is necessary to establish a process by which a broadcast message intended for distribution over the City's voice mail and e-mail systems may be approved for distribution. Broadcast

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messages should not be sent without the approval of the City's Communications Manager. To that end, the City's Communications Manager is authorized to approve or disapprove broadcast messages using the criteria established in this administrative regulation.

5. Broadcast E-mail

5.1 The following are authorized uses of broadcast e-mail:

- 5.1.1 Messages from the City Manager,
- 5.1.2 Emergency messages for which no other means exist to distribute information in a timely manner,
- 5.1.3 Messages that provide support for information communicated in other mediums that need to be reinforced because of their critical importance,
- 5.1.4 Short, important messages that can be most effectively distributed using e-mail or affect only e-mail users. For example, broadcast e-mail may be used to notify e-mail users of scheduled or unscheduled maintenance of the e-mail system when such maintenance will result in prohibited or limited usage of the system.

5.2 Unauthorized uses of broadcast e-mail include:

- 5.2.1 Announcements that can be made just as effectively using more traditional distribution techniques such as flyers, mailers, or distribution of other printed materials,
- 5.2.2 Excessive repetitions of messages,
- 5.2.3 Information that must also be sent to individuals without e-mail access. In that case, consideration should be given to sending the message via the most common communications vehicle available (i.e. flyers, City mail, U.S. mail, etc.) or
- 5.2.4 Using it to make up for poor advance planning of communications needs.

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5.3 The critical test for whether broadcast e-mail will be authorized is whether the recipients of the message or a City program will be significantly affected if the broadcast e-mail message is not sent. If the answer is “yes,” then a broadcast message may be authorized. If the answer is “no”, then another means of communication should be chosen.

5.4 It is the responsibility of the recipient of broadcast messages to send any reply to the appropriate contact listed in the broadcast message if different than the person originating the message.

5.5 Attachments can only be made to GroupWise e-mail accounts. Mainframe e-mail accounts do not accept attachments, but, at the discretion of the Communications Manager, text from an attachment going to GroupWise accounts may be placed in the body of a mainframe e-mail.

6. Broadcast Voice Mail

6.1 The use of Citywide broadcast voice mail is limited solely to emergency messages that have been approved by the Communications Manager or important messages from the City Manager.

7. Process for Creating, Approving and Sending Broadcast Messages

7.1 Draft the proposed broadcast voice mail or e-mail message.

7.1.1 Broadcast e-mail messages should ideally be no longer than 200 words and should contain the name, phone number, and e-mail address of a contact person. The subject heading of an approved broadcast e-mail should be labeled as follows: “BROADCAST: xxxxxxxxxxxx.” This labeling will advise employees the message is a broadcast e-mail.

7.1.2 Because broadcast voice mail cannot be skipped or deleted without being heard, the time of the body of the message should be no more than 30 seconds. Broadcast voice mail should be prefaced as follows: “This is a broadcast message about xxx xxxxxx xxxxxx” and should be followed by the name and phone number of a contact person. Message length does not include time for preface and contact information.

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- 7.2 Send the proposed broadcast message to the Communications Manager via e-mail. Include:
- a. The proposed broadcast date;
 - b. On what grounds it meets the requirements of this administrative regulation;
 - c. How personnel without voice-mail or e-mail receive the same information by another means; and
 - d. The name, phone number, and e-mail address of the person to be contacted for more information.

For e-mail messages, the submission should also specify if the message should go only to GroupWise users, only to mainframe users, or to both.

7.3 The City's Communications Manager will:

- 7.3.1 Determine whether the proposed message meets the criteria of this administrative regulation, and whether the message may be sent or not;
- 7.3.2 Helps shape the broadcast message to meet the criteria of this administrative regulation; and
- 7.3.3 If the criteria cannot be met, try to identify a way to send the message using another, more effective, authorized format.

7.4 If approved, the Communications Manager will send the text of the broadcast message to the City's public access technology manager who will arrange for broadcasting.

7.5 Minimum notice between final approval by the Communications Manager and implementation by the public access technology manager is three days, except in emergencies when the nature of the message will dictate implementation time.

8. Reporting the Unauthorized Use of Broadcast Messages

8.1 Users who believe an unauthorized broadcast message has been sent should send their concerns to the Communications Manager.

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APPENDIX

Legal References

Administrative Regulation 90.62

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City Manager