



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

IL 19-2006-001

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July 6, 2006

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER'S INFORMATION LETTER

**VA NOTICE 06-1 AND VA HANDBOOK 6301, POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR
HANDLING ELECTRONIC MAIL RECORDS**

1. VA Handbook 6301, Policy and Procedures for Handling Electronic Mail Records, has been revised to provide new guidance on the retention and disposition of very short-term temporary electronic mail (email) with a retention period of 180 days or less.
2. In compliance with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) final rule, the Department issued VA Notice 06-1, Final Rule on the Disposal of Transitory Email Records, which provides for the disposition of very short-term temporary email (email with a retention period of 180 days or less) without creating a paper or electronic recordkeeping copy. Under the previous requirements, a paper or electronic recordkeeping copy was required to be maintained.
3. VA Notice 06-1 applies to transitory emails with a retention period of 180 days or less and are covered by NARA's General Records Schedule 23, item 7 or a NARA-approved agency records schedule (e.g. VHA Records Control Schedule (RCS) 10-1). More specifically, VA Notice 06-1 permits agency employees to maintain and delete transitory emails from their "live email" systems without transferring the records to a recordkeeping system provided that the following conditions are met:
 - a. Records are not to be deleted before their NARA-authorized retention periods.
 - b. The email system's automatic delete feature needs to ensure the preservation of the records until their NARA-authorized retention periods have expired. *NOTE: If the auto delete feature is set at 180 days, it may be applied to records with a shorter retention period. In contrast, the auto-delete feature must not be used for records with retention periods greater than 180 days.*
4. While VA Notice 06-1 provides an alternative method for managing transitory emails, agency employees may continue to establish separate recordkeeping copies, including transitory records, if that method serves their business needs. However, employees need to be aware that the disposal of any records, regardless of the record medium, which have been requested under the Freedom of Information Act or other legal or investigative action, may need to be retained until those actions are resolved.

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NOTE: Emails relating to official records of National significance are to continue to be retained and disposed of in accordance with VHA Directive 2005-018, Retention and Disposition of Electronic Mail Relating to Official Records of National Significance.

5. References

a. VA Directive and Handbook 6301. Available at <http://vaww.va.gov/pubs/asp/edsdirec.asp>.

b. NARA's Final Rule: Records Management; Electronic Mail and Records Management and Disposition. Available at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a060221c.html (Scroll down to National Archives and Records Administration).

c. General Records Schedule 23, item 7. Available at [http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/General Records Schedule 23](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/General%20Records%20Schedule%2023).

d. VHA RCS 10-1. Available at <http://vaww1.va.gov/vhapublications/RCS10/rcs10-1.pdf>.

6. Questions may be directed to Mr. Sherwin Lynch at (202) 273-8312.

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VHA Chief Information Officer

Attachment

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