

# New Policy on Acceptable Use of E-Mail Facilities

Since its installation, staff have used the electronic messaging facilities in a positive and productive manner in fulfilling the Department's mandate. However, concern has been expressed recently, from several sources, over the questionable nature of some messages being sent through the ICONDESK e-mail system.

In order to clarify the acceptable uses that departmental staff may make of the e-mail facilities, to foster healthy communications practices, and to prevent further abuses that may be subject to disciplinary action, a Policy on the Acceptable Use of E-Mail Facilities has been developed to guide departmental staff.

The intent of this policy is to foster healthy communications practices and to prevent misuse of the electronic messaging system – not to impose censorship nor to restrict the use of humour in communications. The watchwords of good taste and professional conduct can be both humorous and outside the realm of censorship of any kind.

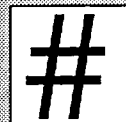
Some things to keep in mind:

- As set out in the departmental Policy for a Harassment-Free Work Place "Doing Unto Others...", users should be guided by considerations of good taste and professional conduct in the content of e-mail as with all other communications media.
  - Harassment is any improper behaviour directed at someone that is either offensive or that the originator ought reasonably to know would be unwelcome.
  - Personal, derogatory and defamatory comments – harassment – will not be tolerated, and the use of abusive or objectionable language in either public or private messages is unacceptable.
  - There is no guarantee of privacy for information in ICONDESK on SIGNET-D.
- There is no such thing as an informal or formal message. All electronic messages are part of the departmental record and, as such, are subject to Access to Information legislation.
- The use of e-mail facilities for unlawful or malicious activities is unacceptable.
  - Use of DFAIT e-mail facilities for personal gain is unacceptable.
  - Uses related to commercial activities such as the unsolicited distribution of advertising material are unacceptable.
  - Other activities that could cause congestion and disruption and systems are unacceptable (e.g., chain letters).

The complete text of this Policy was published as Circular Document 9/96, dated September 24, 1996. This circular, like all other circulars, can be found on the Intranet.

## A telephone message tip

Are you tired of listening to a colleague's recorded greeting when they aren't there to answer your call? You can by-pass the greeting by pressing the # symbol. Doing so takes you directly to the beep, after which you can leave your message. No fuss, no muss. Now you can get straight to the point, with minimum time wasted.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> This shortcut cannot be used when the extended absence greeting is in effect.