

Memorandum

To: All Employees

From: J. Steven Griles, Deputy Secretary /s/

Subject: Responsibility for Maintaining Electronic-Mail (E-mail) Records

This memorandum is to remind all employees and Federal contractors of their responsibility for preserving, protecting and maintaining official records created or received using electronic mail (e-mail). IRM Bulletin 96-06, 7/25/96, Policy and Guidance for Managing the Creation, Retention, and Disposition of Electronic Documents provides Department-wide policy and guidance for managing electronic records (including e-mail records). This policy is accessible at www.doi.gov/ocio/records/policy/policies.htm.

Current policy based on National Archives and Records Administration regulations (36 CFR Part 1234.24, Standards for Managing Electronic Mail Records) requires that **all official electronic records should be printed out in hard copy and filed in the official paper recordkeeping system**. Only after this is done can you delete the electronic version, if you no longer need the electronic version.

Official Records: E-mail documents ARE official records when they:

- Are created or received in the transaction of agency business and
 - Are appropriate for preservation as evidence of the government's function and activities;
- or
- Are valuable because of the information they contain

Not Official Records: E-mail documents ARE NOT official records when they:

- Provide no evidence of agency functions and activities
- Lack information of value
- Duplicate information already documented in existing records

If an e-mail message meets the above criteria as an official record, the message (**including all attachments and transmission information**) must be printed to paper and filed according to the agency's recordkeeping system.

Special Instructions – Cobell: Because of the Cobell v. Norton litigation, special instructions apply for printing and deleting e-mail messages related to this case. Included in electronic records that must be printed and filed are all e-mail messages (with all attachments) that relate to:

- Cobell v. Norton litigation
- American Indian trust reform activities
- Administration of Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts

E-mail messages relating to one of these three areas may be electronically deleted only after you have been notified by either your e-mail system administrator or your CIO that your regular system backup or another approved method has captured the electronic copy.

Supervisors and managers must ensure that all employees and others who may handle Federal records (including contractors, interns, students, and volunteers) receive this memorandum and are complying with this policy. If you have additional questions about this guidance, please contact your bureau/office Records Officer first, and, if questions remain, contact the Departmental Records Officer, Mr. Ed McCeney, at (202) 208-3321.