



**TEXAS BOARD  
OF  
PARDONS AND PAROLES**

**Number: BPP-DIR. 141.357**  
**Date: November 24, 2014**  
**Page: 1 of 4**  
**Supersedes: BPP-DIR. 141.357**  
**Dated August 24, 2011**

## **BOARD DIRECTIVE**

---

**SUBJECT: TEXAS BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES  
ELECTRONIC MAIL (EMAIL)**

**DIRECTIVE:** The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for the administrative process for electronic mail for Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (Board) who use any Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Information Resources.

**AUTHORITY:** Texas Government Code Sections 2054.001 (a) and (b); 2054.003 (6) and (7); 2054.051 (a) and (b); 2054.052 (a); and 2203.004; Texas Administrative Code Title 1, Part 10, Chapter 202, and Rules 202.20 (1), (2), (3), and (4).

**DISCUSSION:** The Board requires utilization of electronic messages (email) in accordance with State law and ethical considerations.

Under the provisions of the Information Resources Management Act, information resources are strategic assets of the State of Texas that must be managed as valuable state resources. Thus, this policy is established to achieve the following:

- To ensure compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, and mandates regarding the management of information resources;
- To create prudent and acceptable practices regarding the use of email; and
- To educate individuals using email with respect to their responsibilities associated with such use.

**DEFINITIONS:** For purposes of this directive, the following definitions will apply:

Confidential Information - information maintained by the TDCJ that is exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the Texas Public Information Act (also known as the Texas Open Records Act) or other state or federal law.

Electronic mail system - refers to any computer software application that allows electronic mail to be communicated from one computing system to another.

Electronic mail (email) - any message, image, form, attachment, data, or other communication sent, received, or stored within an electronic mail system.

Information Resources (IR) - any and all computer printouts, online display devices, magnetic storage media, and all computer-related activities involving any device capable of receiving email, browsing Web sites, or otherwise capable of receiving, storing, managing, or transmitting electronic data including, but not limited to, mainframes, servers, personal computers, notebook computers, hand-held computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), pagers, distributed processing systems, network attached and computer controlled medical and laboratory equipment (i.e. embedded technology), telecommunication resources, network environments, telephones, fax machines, printers and service bureaus. Additionally, it is the procedures, equipment, facilities, software, and data that are designed, built, operated, and maintained to create, collect, record, process, store, retrieve, display, and transmit information.

Sensitive Information - information maintained by the TDCJ that requires special precautions to assure its accuracy and integrity by utilizing error checking, verification procedures, and/or access control to protect it from unauthorized modification or deletion. Sensitive information may be either public or confidential and requires a higher than normal assurance of accuracy and completeness.

**PROCEDURE:**

Email and the messages sent via TDCJ electronic mail systems are considered the same as all other office equipment and work produced. They are the property of the TDCJ, whose management maintains the right to access. All user activity on TDCJ IR assets is subject to logging and review. There is no expectation of privacy in email.

I. Utilization

A. Emails are to be used to conduct State business. When using email for these purposes, the messages should be directed to the specific users who have an interest in or need to know the information. Excessive use of email for social or special interest messages may impact other IR systems. The following information may be sent by email with the approval of the Presiding Officer (Chair):

1. Information about charitable or social activities of special interest to Board staff or social activities of special interest to the Board; and

2. Condolences and funeral announcements about employees, their relatives, or former employees.
- B. Email users shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of the Board unless appropriately authorized (explicitly or implicitly) to do so. Where appropriate, an explicit disclaimer will be included unless it is clear from the context that the author is not representing the Board. An example of a simple disclaimer is: "the opinions expressed are my own, and not necessarily those of my employer,"
- C. Individuals shall not send, forward, or request to receive confidential or sensitive Board or TDCJ information through non-TDCJ email accounts. Examples of non-TDCJ email accounts include, but are not limited to, Hotmail, Yahoo mail, AOL mail, and email provided by other Internet Service Providers (ISPs).
- D. Individuals shall not send, forward, request to receive, or store confidential or sensitive Board or TDCJ information utilizing non-TDCJ accredited mobile devices. Examples of mobile devices include, but are not limited to, PDAs, two-way pagers and cellular telephones.
- E. Email users who elect to display a photo with their email profile shall only display a photo of the agency seal or a professional photo in business/professional attire of the head and shoulders. The employee's immediate supervisor has the discretion to determine the appropriateness of the photo.

## II. Prohibited Activities

- A. The following activities are prohibited by policy:
  1. Sending email that is intimidating or harassing;
  2. Using email to transmit or receive material that may be offensive, indecent, or obscene;
  3. Use of email for personal benefit or non- Board or non-TDCJ personal solicitations;
  4. Sending email for purposes of political lobbying or campaigning;
  5. Posing as anyone other than oneself when sending email, except when authorized to send messages for another when serving in an administrative support role; and
  6. The use of unauthorized email software. Authorized software is listed in the TDCJ Standards-Based Architecture (SBA) document; and use of language that violates TDCJ PD-22, General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees, (Attachment A, Rules 14, 21, or 22), or usage that

violates the Board's Ethics Policy, BPP-DIR 141.309, which will result in disciplinary action in accordance with TDCJ PD-22. All email messages are subject to review and approval by supervisors, whether or not they contain information deemed confidential by the Board or TDCJ.

- B. The following activities are prohibited, as they impede the functioning of network communications and the efficient operations of email systems:
  - 1. Sending or forwarding chain letters; and
  - 2. Sending unsolicited messages to large groups except as required to conduct Board business.
- C. All email activities and Internet sites accessed as a result of using email must comply with TDCJ AD-15.07, TDCJ Information Resources Acceptable Use Policy.

III. Enforcement

- A. In accordance with TDCJ PD-22, violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include termination for employees and temporaries, a termination of employment relations in the case of contractors or consultants, or dismissal for interns and volunteers. Additionally, individuals are subject to loss of TDCJ IR access privileges, civil, and criminal prosecution.
- B. Any violations of state or federal law regarding this policy shall be reported to the Board's Office of the General Counsel for further investigation.

**SIGNED THIS, THE 24<sup>th</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2014.**

**RISSIE OWENS, PRESIDING OFFICER (CHAIR)**

*\*Signature on file.*