



# WASHINGTON FIRE COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION

## Proposed Email Guidelines & Etiquette

### COMPOSING AND SENDING EMAIL

#### DO...

- Make your message concise and to the point—keep it short, simple and focused.
- Use the Subject Line.



- Read your email **carefully** before sending.
- Make sure your contact information is on the email (address, phone number, fax number).
- Alert the recipient of any attachment you are sending.
- Be sensitive to language that could be construed as sarcastic, sexist, etc. (email restricts our ability to use facial features, gestures and voice inflection to understand what another person is communicating, which can sometimes make it difficult to “read” the tone of a message).

#### DON'T...

- Send messages of a sensitive or confidential nature.
- Send messages that could be potentially damaging to someone else's reputation, including your own.
- Reference sensitive subjects such as religion, politics and/or controversial topics.
- Use all CAPITAL letters—it's considered a verbal “shout”.
- Send email to communicate complaints or dissatisfaction with someone. Instead, consider a telephone or face-to-face conversation with the person. If you are upset and want to send an angry reply, hold off—give yourself time to rethink how you would like to handle the situation.



### OPENING EMAIL

- Use care in opening emails from an unknown source.
- Never open an unexpected attachment, even from someone you know.



### REPLYING TO EMAIL

- Use the “Reply to” or “Reply to All” option in order to maintain a link to the original message and maintain the “thread” of correspondence.
- If you respond more than three times on the same topic, consider a telephone or face-to-face conversation.

### PRIVACY



- Email is **not** a secure form of communication and in fact, is subject to review with sufficient justification. It can be used for legal actions as well as evidence as part of an investigation.
- Your message might get into the wrong hands if it is mistakenly addressed.
- Check with the original sender when forwarding email; it may be deemed inappropriate to forward all or a portion of a message.
- Email is forever...if you don't want it broadcast on the 11 o'clock news, then don't put it in your email!