

# THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF PINEY

## “E-mail Policy”

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**Subject:**            **E-mail**

**Effective Date:**   **February 11, 2015**

**Replaces Policy:**   **New**

**Resolution No.:**   **389**            **Resolution Date:**   **February 10, 2015**

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of The Rural Municipality of Piney electronic mail (e-mail) and for the creation, retention, management and disposal of e-mail that meet legal requirements and operational needs.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Electronic media is quickly replacing paper as the preferred means of performing business transactions and communication. Like their paper counterparts, electronic records need to be recorded and captured in a form which ensures their accuracy and integrity. Electronic records need to provide evidence of business activity at the same level of accountability as paper records. Electronic records must be able to meet the immediate and future needs of The Rural Municipality of Piney and the members of the public. E-mail is an electronic record which needs proper management through appropriate policies and procedures, as well as monitoring and compliance tools.

### POLICY

1. The e-mail system is part of the corporation’s computer network and all the information processes, transmitted or stored in the system, is the property of The Rural Municipality of Piney. When an employee is not at work, a colleague will be responsible for checking the absent employee’s e-mail for time sensitive correspondence. Because an employee’s municipal e-mail account is not for his/her eyes only, it is highly recommended that it not be used for personal e-mails. There is no rule against using their municipal email for personal e-mails but they must keep in mind that other people will have access to their e-mail account and everything in it.

2. Clarification on E-mails as Records

E-mail messages fall into two categories:

a) "Official Records" are generated or received in connection with the transaction of Municipal business, and preserved for a period of time as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities on the Municipality. This would include **(but is not limited to)**:

- Recording official decisions;
- Communicating decisions about policies;
- Anything regarding program delivery;
- Anything containing background information used to develop other Municipal documents; etc.

E-mail should be treated with the same significance as the signed letter. Passwords and the ability to send an e-mail message has the same authority as signed correspondence.

b) "Transitory Records" are records of limited or no documentary value and/or are unrelated to Municipal business. Transitory records include temporary e-mail communications of a non-vital nature as well as copies of records kept solely for convenience or reference purposes and may be discarded routinely. Unclassified e-mails are considered to be transitory records.

3. Employees have the same responsibilities for e-mail messages as for any other document and must apply the same decision-making process to determine whether the data qualifies as "official records" or "transitory records".

4. E-mails determined to be "official records" shall be saved under the appropriate folder in the employees email account or printed in paper format and filed in the appropriate file. E-mails falling in this category may be accessible to the public under the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and are subject to the same legal obligations, policies, rules, directives and legislations/regulations as paper documents.

5. E-mails determined to be "transitory records" shall be deleted by the user when no longer needed for short-term reference. Electronic files, e-mails and data falling into this category are not subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, but are subject to the rules of e-discovery in the event of litigation and may be used as evidence for law enforcement purposes. It is imperative transitory e-mails be purged periodically. Transitory records may include **(but is not limited to)**:

- Miscellaneous notices, memoranda or memos on minor administrative details
- Preliminary drafts which do not form significant stages in the preparation of a final document and do not record official decisions
- Duplicate copies of documents retained only for distribution or convenience
- Personal messages
- Publications (directories, catalogues, newsletters, pamphlets, periodicals, etc.)
- Blank forms
- Unsolicited advertising (brochures, fliers, etc)

6. It is important for staff to realize that e-mails, just like paper documents, can be subject to legal processes and may be disclosed to the public based on the requirements of FIPPA. Employing appropriate information management principles will ensure that records are kept or destroyed as a routine part of business.
7. E-mail systems should not be assumed to be secure. Staff must be aware of the potential risks involved in sending confidential or sensitive information by e-mail. If it is necessary to transmit confidential information on the e-mail system, care must be exercised because of the ease of redistributing such information
8. E-mail messages which the employee has deemed to be official documents become corporate records and must be retained in accordance with the retention periods listed in the "Retention and Disposition of Municipal Records Regulation".