

Email Etiquette

Civil Uses for E-mail:

- Assuring that everyone knows about appointments and meetings
- When ensuring timely communication
- Conveying accurate information, data, and attachments to all that needs to know
- Supporting flexible work arrangements (e.g. telecommuting)
- When asking for broad input

Civil Email Etiquette:

- **Be concise.** Make the subject line descriptive so recipient can prioritize. Start with a greeting and end with a closing including signature, contact details (Greetings; Hello; Thank you; Best Wishes, etc.).
- **Mark only to relevant people** who need to take action on the mail. Copy using "CC" to those whom the mail is "information only".
- **Use blind carbon copy (Bcc)** when you need to send out a mass email, not everyone needs to know all the recipients.
- **Avoid longer messages** as recipient is less likely to read them carefully. Be sure to underline or bold important message and/or action items.
- **Respond in a timely manner** (24 hrs. if possible), if you require more time, respond with when you can get back to them.
- **Check** for confidential information before forwarding.

Uncivil Uses for E-mail:

- In place of staff meetings, one-on-ones or avoidance of face-to-face interactions
- Calling out or criticizing someone in a mass email
- Forwarding without consent (explicit or implicit)
- To avoid settling a conflict with someone in person
- To discuss controversial or confidential topics- there is no expectation of privacy in emails

Uncivil Email Uses:

- **Emailing when angry or emotional:** if needed, take a few deep breaths and wait on the response for 24hrs.
- **Never try to resolve conflict via email.** Back and forth email discussions over a situation can make it worse. Pick up the phone or set up a time to talk in person.
- **Over-use of priority flags on emails:** Carefully prioritize your requests. If too many are marked priority the recipient may become overwhelmed.
- **Unnecessary uses of reply-all:** Use the "reply-all" only when it is relevant to everyone. If not, reply only to the original writer. Ask yourself, "Do all these other people need to hear my reply?"
- **Avoid sarcasm or humor:** without body language and tone it can be mistaken for rudeness.
- **Typing in ALL CAPS** can be read as shouting, aggressive or too assertive.