



TITLE	POLICY NUMBER	
Electronic Communication Etiquette	DCS 11-05	
RESPONSIBLE AREA	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISION
Communications	4/6/2016	7

I. POLICY STATEMENT

To provide excellent customer service and ease of communication within the Department of Child Safety (DCS) and with the public, DCS shall implement standard electronic communication etiquette for consistency across the agency.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all DCS employees (including contracted employees, temporary employees, volunteers, and interns) who communicate via Department-assigned devices.

III. AUTHORITY

[DCS 02-24](#) Records Management Policy

[DCS 06-02](#) Litigation Hold

[DCS 05-8280](#) Acceptable Use Policy

IV. DEFINITIONS

Electronic communication: The transfer of information via electronic or wireless systems. It includes email and attachments, spreadsheets, instant and text messages, databases, calendars and planners, photos, audio files and videos, and other multimedia, and all other types of information that are commonly created, stored, and transferred by a state-issued electronic device.

V. POLICY

A. Security and Privacy of Electronic Communication

1. DCS employees have a responsibility to learn about and comply with the DCS policy on Acceptable Use ([DCS 05-8280](#)) of electronic services. Examples of prohibited uses of electronic communication include:
 - a. use for personal purposes, personal gain, or commercial activities;
 - b. intentional and unauthorized access to other people's electronic communication;
 - c. sending spam, chain letters, or any other type of unauthorized widespread electronic distribution of unsolicited material;
 - d. use of electronic communication for partisan political or lobbying activities;
 - e. creation and use of a false or alias identity to impersonate another or send fraudulent communications;
 - f. use of electronic communication to transmit materials in a manner which violates copyright laws.
2. Email security must comply with the Acceptable Use ([DCS 05-8280](#)) policy.
 - a. All emails containing confidential information that are transmitted outside of DCS information systems shall be encrypted regardless of the recipient, except when transmitting it to staff at the Attorney General's Office.
 - b. All emails that contain Protected Health Information (PHI) sent to any external party, including the Attorney General's Office, must be encrypted, even if the information is only found in an attachment to the email.
3. To ensure confidentiality of data and information via electronic

communication, new threads should be used as often as possible. It is strictly prohibited to forward confidential data and information to unauthorized parties or other employees not relevant to a case.

4. Employees are advised that electronic data may be reviewed and/or accessed by authorized DCS officials for purposes related to DCS business. DCS has the authority to access and inspect the contents of any equipment, files, or communication on its electronic systems.
5. Employees are advised that electronic data is public record and may be reviewed and/or accessed by authorized members of the public upon request, after sufficient data redaction has occurred.
6. Email and electronic communication platforms are provided only while a user is employed by DCS and once a user's electronic privileges are terminated, employees may no longer access the contents of their platforms, nor should they export their electronic communication to a personal account before departure.

B. Electronic Communication Branding, Etiquette, and Retention

1. All employees, including contracted and temporary employees, volunteers, and interns, shall use the standardized *signature* summarized in section VI with the required information in all new email communications and replies to emails. Mobile devices should also be set up to use the standardized signature and not the pre-loaded mobile device branding.
2. All employees, including contracted and temporary employees, volunteers, and interns, shall use the standardized email *format* summarized in section VI, with the required information in all new email communications. This includes placing the case name at the beginning of each new thread and any response to emails received where the thread did not already have the case name properly mentioned.
3. Electronic communications should be answered within three days, excluding weekends and holidays.
 - a. Urgent matters requiring a response, such as client communication, legal correspondence, communication with supervisors, and matters concerning a deadline should be answered immediately but

not more than one day of the message's original delivery time, excluding weekends and holidays.

- b. All other electronic communications should be answered within three days, excluding weekends and holidays.
- 4. Official DCS communications, such as urgent bulk email and policy announcements, should be reviewed at least once a day within 24 hours of the message's delivery, since those communications may affect day-to-day activities and responsibilities.
- 5. All electronic communications should be retained consistent with the guidelines provided in DCS 02-24; see the [Records Management Policy \(DCS 02-24\)](#) for more information.
- 6. All emails under litigation hold should be retained in compliance with the *Litigation Hold* policy; see [DCS 06-02](#) for more information.
- 7. Automated Out-of-Office responses should be used to notify senders that the recipient is out of the office or not available for one or more business days. The automated response should include:
 - a. how long the recipient will be out of the office;
 - b. what date the recipient is expected to return to the office to review messages; and
 - c. who the sender may contact in place of the absent employee in case of an emergency.

C. Attorney Client Privilege

- 1. Electronic communication should be clearly and appropriately titled. Ensure the subject line of the email has the sensitivity label [Attorney Client Privilege] when Attorney Client Privilege applies to the content of the message. This generally applies to:
 - a. communication between lawyer and client (person or corporation);
 - b. communication in which the purpose is to seek or obtain legal

advice about a case; and

- c. communication that is made to a lawyer acting in their capacity as a lawyer.
2. When Attorney Client Privilege applies, under no circumstances should electronic communication be shared or forwarded outside of the department, including contracted employees. Exchange of communications where Attorney Client Privilege applies is acceptable if occurring between internal department employees, if each recipient has relevance in receiving such information.
 3. When an inquiry is being sent to an attorney, the communication should be sent as a new thread with any supporting documentation, such as other emails, attached to the new message.
 4. When attorneys are sending communication as a response to inquiries, the response must clearly indicate their role as a legal advisor.
 5. Only the Director of the Department, or designee, is permitted to waive Attorney Client Privilege in situations which they deem appropriate.

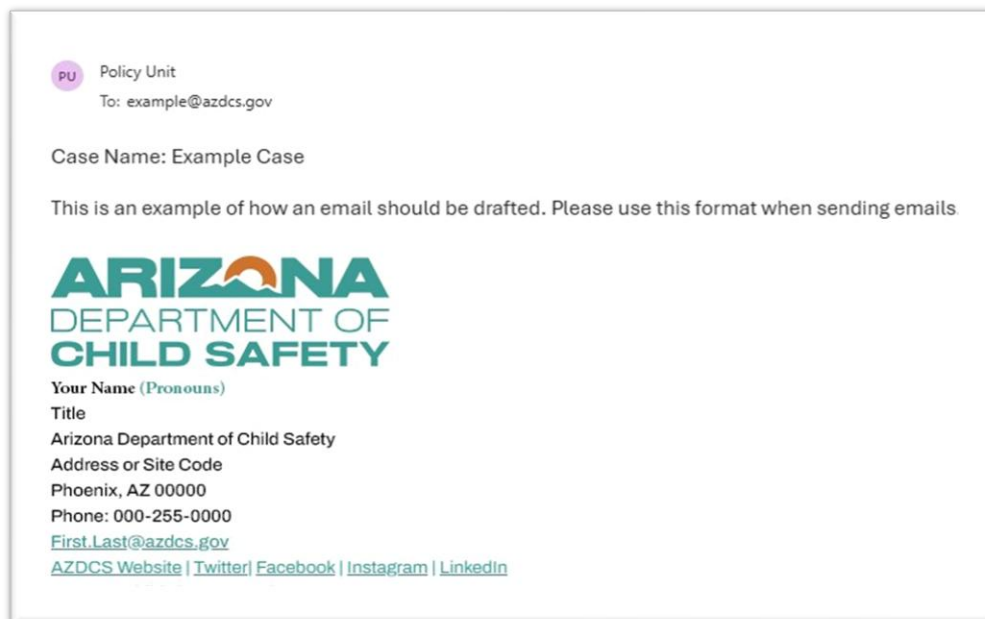
D. Professionalism and Ethics in Electronic Communication

1. DCS employees shall observe the Department's Professionalism and Ethics policy (DCS 04-02) while engaged in all electronic communication. Communications should be:
 - a. concise and direct;
 - b. respectful, appropriate, and within the scope of professional duties;
 - c. checked before sending to ensure clarity and purpose.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Email Content and Format

The following template must be used:



B. Email Signature

1. Create an Email Signature Block
 - a. Begin a New Email.
 - b. Go to the “Message” tab.
 - c. Select “Signature.”
 - d. Click on “Signatures.”
 - e. Select “New.”
 - f. Name the Signature such as “Main Signature.”
 - g. Copy/paste the signature block template from the policy into the blank space, being sure to copy the logo and core values graphics as well.
 - h. Edit Information as needed (e.g. manual spell check).
 - i. Save your signature.
 - j. Make sure this is the “default signature.”

- k. In the top right corner of the signature box, click on the drop boxes that say, “New Signature” and “Replies/Forwards,” and click on the name of the new signature, so that all emails will have the signature block at the bottom.

2. Design

The following design including font, font and logo size, and placement of information shall be used on all new emails. The use of background designs is not permissible. Pronouns may be used after the person’s name, but they are not required.



First Last (pronouns)

Title

Arizona Department of Child Safety

Address or Site Code

Phoenix, AZ 00000

Phone: 000-255-0000

First.Last@azdcs.gov

[AZDCS Website](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

To report child abuse or neglect: 1-888-SOS-CHILD

Safety · Accountability · Change · Family · Engagement · Compassion · Teaming · Advocacy · Equity

3. Required Signature

All DCS employees, including contractors, temporary employees, volunteers, and interns who have a Department email account shall apply the required signature in section VI.B in all new emails and replies to emails.