



**NIC**

**National Informatics Centre**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

**Policy for**  
**Messaging Services**  
**For**  
**Government of India**  
  
**(August 2007)**

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**  
**Department of Information Technology**  
**National Informatics Centre**

<b>National Informatics Centre</b>	<b>Messaging policy for Govt of India</b>	<b>Version: Ver 1.0</b>
<b>Classification:Unclassified</b>	<b>Audience:Govt/State Govt of India</b>	
<b>Name of the Document: NIC-MAV/SK/NICNET OPERATIONS-002</b>	<b>Status :Accepted</b>	<b>Date of Last Change: 28 Aug 2007</b>

### **Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper access, usage and disclosure of NIC's Messaging system by its users. Users have the responsibility to use this resource in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner. Use of the NIC's Messaging system evidences the user's agreement to be bound by this policy. Violations of the policy are a violation of the Code of Users Conduct and may result in account deactivation/probe by Govt investigating agencies. The action would depend on the nature of violation.

It may please be noted that this Policy supersedes any other policy previously written.

This policy addresses the following issues:

- 1) Account Creation
- 2) Profile of users who can request for Account
- 3) Ownership of email data transmitted
- 4) Email Addresses based on designation
- 5) Privacy
- 6) Data Retention
- 7) Data Backup
- 8) Expiration/Deactivation of Accounts
- 9) Appropriate Use
- 10) User Responsibility
- 11) Supported Email Clients
- 12) SPAM and Virus

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### **Scope of the Policy:**

*This policy applies to all mail servers configured in Govt of India, including State Govt. The Administration of server may or may not be under NIC control, but adherence to the policy is mandatory for running messaging services. All organisations that choose to run their own mail services in Govt, need to adopt this policy prior to making the services online.*

#### **1) Account Creation**

Email accounts are created once a user registers for the same by filling out the form available on <https://mail.nic.in> site. The account will be activated after due authorization by the Competent authority.

The account has to be duly signed by the NIC Coordinator. The official authorized to sign the form has to be the HOD of the said Deptt/Division/Group . No one else can sign the form authorizing a request to open an account.

The email account name is created based on the email addressing policy placed on the NIC Messaging Website (refer A above). Requests for mail aliases based on name preference, middle name, nicknames, etc., cannot be accommodated.

No requests for id change will be entertained, other than to correct a discrepancy between id requested for and created.

Time taken to create a single account is one working day. However, bulk creation of accounts (10 or above) will be released after 2 working days.

Forms for account creation in NICNET have been enclosed as Annexure F and Annexure G respectively.

#### **2) Profile of users who can request for an Email Account in NICNET :**

For a request to be considered for account creation, a user needs to be an employee working in an organization under one of the following heads:

- A) Regular Employee of Govt of India/ Statutory Body/PSU/Non-Profit society/Commissions/Autonomous Bodies constituted under Govt of India/ R&D Bodies of Govt of India
- B) Representatives of legislature/parliament/Judiciary

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C) Consultant/Contract Employee: An account will be created for a consultant/contract employee , after due authorization by the Project Coordinator. The account will be flagged as “Temporary” with a activation and deactivation date. Extension can be given after due authorization only.

### ***3) Ownership of email data transmitted***

NIC does not take responsibility for any data/message (including attachment) that is transmitted using the NICNET Messaging system. All messages/data sent through the mail server are the sole responsibility of the user owing the account.

If the two communicating parties find it necessary to strongly authenticate the source of a mail, digitally signed message transactions may be done.

### ***4) Email Addresses based on Designation***

Email id’s can be created based on both name and designation. Subsequent to due authorization from Competent Authority, an official can have an id in his personal name in addition to one assigned based on his official designation.

Prior to leaving an organization on retirement/transfer etc, the official to whom an id has been assigned should ensure that the id that has been given to him in an official capacity should be deactivated. His successor will need to get the account activated. This is being done to prevent unauthorized access to an account.

### ***5) Privacy***

NIC will make every attempt to keep email messages confidential. However, under certain circumstances (request for access by a designated Govt Investigating agency), it may be necessary for authorized NIC officials to access email files in connection with abuse incidents or violations of this or other NICNET policies by the user.

### ***5) Data Retention(Refer IT Act 2000)***

Individuals are responsible for saving email messages as they deem appropriate. Messages will be automatically purged from folders after the time periods as shown below:

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- Inbox – 1 year
- Sent - 120 days
- Trash - 10 days
- Probably Spam – 15 days

Due to finite resources, NIC has the right to restrict the amount of user space on the email server as necessary, to revise the above retention policies with appropriate IT Committee approval and advance notice.

#### **7) Data Backup(Refer IT Act 2000)**

The email system is backed up on a regular basis as a way of recovering from a system failure/crash/loss impacting the messaging system. However, the request for recovery by a user will be entertained only under very special circumstances as deemed logical by the Administrator of the system. Hence, each email user is responsible for backing up individual messages and folders as appropriate.

In the eventuality of a disaster/calamity, NIC would make all possible attempts to restore services and content. However, due to circumstances beyond NIC control, NIC cannot be held responsible for loss of data and services.

#### **8) Expiration/Deactivation/Deletion of Accounts**

An account will be Expired/Deactivated or deleted under the following conditions:

- A) The Officer resigns from service.
- B) The officer retires from Service. In the case of officers of the designation of JS and above or Equivalent in Govt of India, the account assigned in their personal name can be retained for a life time. They would need to surrender their official account prior to retirement.
- C) The officer is no longer in a position to perform his duties (death/missing etc)
- D) Any account which is inactive for a period of 90 days will be deactivated, if no intimation is given to the NIC cell. If an account is not accessed for 90 days continuously, it is deemed as inactive. The account will be deleted from the NIC Messaging system after a period of 9 months, if no request for activation is received during this duration. Subsequently, all formalities will need to be completed all over again for re-opening of the said account with the same id, subject to availability.

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It is the mandate of authorized personnel across Ministries/Deptt/PSU under whose request the account has been created to inform the concerned group in NIC/support cell when either of the above condition is triggered. In the case of point (B) above, even if the officer falls under the scale of JS and above, messaging support group ([support@nic.in](mailto:support@nic.in)) in NIC needs to be informed as the account flag needs to be changed from in-service to retired.

In case information is not sent on time, NIC will not be held responsible in case the account is misused and comes under access from designated Govt investigating agencies.

### ***9) Appropriate Use***

Email is provided as a professional resource to assist users to fulfill their official goals.

### **Examples of Inappropriate Use**

Any inappropriate email, some examples of which are described below and elsewhere in this policy, is prohibited.

- The creation and exchange of messages those are harassing, obscene or threatening.
- The unauthorized exchange of proprietary information or any other privileged, confidential sensitive information.
- The creation and exchange of advertisements, solicitations, chain letters and other unofficial, unsolicited email.
- The creation and exchange of information in violation of any laws, including copyright laws.
- Knowingly transmission of a message containing a computer virus.
- The misrepresentation of the identity of the sender of an email.
- The use or attempt to use the accounts of others without their permission.
- Exchange of mails containing Anti-National Messages.

communications. In case of inappropriate use, it will be considered a violation of the

Material that is fraudulent, harassing, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or anti-national, unlawful or inappropriate may not be sent by email or other form of electronic

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policy and may result in disciplinary action by Govt Investigating agencies depending on the nature of violation.

### ***10) User Responsibility***

Sharing of passwords is strictly prohibited. Each individual is responsible for his/her account, including the safeguarding of access to the account. All email originating from an account is deemed to be authored by the account owner, and it is the responsibility of that owner to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

The user is responsible for surrendering his/her email id if any of the conditions mentioned under clause no 8 (barring point C) is invoked. If point C is invoked, then the onus of informing NIC , is with the official who has authorized account creation.

### ***11) Supported Email Clients***

The method for accessing email is through a web client. Use of an alternate method, such as the Outlook client, Microsoft Outlook/ Mozilla/Thunderbird is also available. End-user support for the system will be provided through the Support Helpdesk over Phone/email(support@nic.in). The NIC Messaging Group is always in the process of evaluating tools and technologies and supports all industry standards.

Use of clients supporting POP3s/IMAPs and HTTPs are recommended

### ***12) SPAM & Virus***

While the incoming/outgoing email is scanned for viruses and for messages deemed to be ‘SPAM’, it is impossible to guarantee protection against all SPAM and virus infected messages. It is therefore the responsibility of each individual to exercise caution and use proper care and consideration to prevent the spread of viruses. In many cases viruses appear to be sent from a friend or coworker. Attachments should only be opened when the user is sure of the nature of the message. If any doubt exists, the user should contact sender to verify the authenticity of the message and/or the attachment. For more details refer to “Spam and Mail Policy” and “Best Practices for Anti-Virus” available on <https://mail.nic.in>.

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The AntiSpam software configured in NIC tags the mail that it identifies as SPAM. In order to avoid dropping of a genuine mail, all mails are delivered to the end users mailbox. However, mails identified as SPAM are dropped in the “Probably Spam” folder.

Users need to check the Probably Spam folder once a day for any mails , which inadvertently got marked as Spam and got delivered to the spam folder instead of INBOX. Subsequent to checking, the user needs to empty the contents of the ProbablySpam folder.

***13) Payment Criteria:***

NIC has an Email Pricing Policy which includes details on pricing and the user profile which falls under the “Paid’ Category. The policy is enclosed as Annexure D.

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## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- 1) Users are requested to keep the given userid and password confidential . Wherever possible use SSL based secured communication channel (like https, pop3s, imaps) to avoid stealing of the password.
- 2) Please change your password atleast once in every three months or the mail system will force you to do so.
- 3) Do not open any attachments unless, it has come from a known source. Delete those mails which are not relevant to you . They might contain a virus that may corrupt your computer.
- 4) Installation of an Anti-Virus Software, Personal Firewall and Host Intrusion Prevention System is mandatory on every client being used to access NIC Email. In the absence of the same, NIC can discontinue the account , if infected traffic is generated from the id.
- 5) Users will install the Antivirus software and update the pattern periodically and install the latest OS patches on the system.
- 6) While using mail clients like Outlook, Outlook Express on Microsoft WINDOWS 9X/ ME/ NT/ 2000 Prof./XP/windows mail on Vista/Eudora, please apply the appropriate patches announced by Microsoft from time to time.
- 7) NIC is not responsible for the contents that are being sent as part of the mail. The message/data expressed are solely that of the person who owns the account.
- 8) Contact our 24x7 support cell if you have any problem on Phone no's 011-24360088/011-24360084 or you can send a mail to [support@nic.in](mailto:support@nic.in) .
- 9) NIC will take all possible measures to prevent data loss, however, due to unforeseen technical issues, if the same happens, NIC cannot be held responsible ..
- 10) Individuals are responsible for saving email messages as they deem appropriate. Messages will be automatically purged from folders as follows:
  - Inbox – 1 year
  - Sent - 120 days
  - Trash -10 days
  - ProbablySpam – 15 days
- 11) At times, it may be necessary for authorised NIC officials to access email files to, investigate security or abuse incidents or violations of this or other NICNET policies. Such access will be on an as needed basis and any email accessed will only be disclosed to those individuals with a need to know or as required by law
- 12) If a user wishes to ensure complete confidentiality of his mail , then he needs to use end to end encryption techniques which are built-in with clients like outlook, thunderbird. The procedure to configure mail clients is available on <http://mail.nic.in> subsequent to authentication .
- 13) NIC account will be deactivated, if not used for 90 days.
- 14) Email id will be deleted after a period of 9 months from the date of deactivation if no request for activation is received.

- 15) By Submitting this form, You Agree that you have read the Terms and Conditions for using the NIC Messaging Services, and you agree to abide with the same
- 16) NIC reserves the right to alter the Terms and Conditions from time to time as maybe required in the best interest for ensuring trouble free messaging services.