

**UNIVERSITY of NORTH DAKOTA  
OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

**Policy for the Retention of Electronic Mail (E-mail):  
Backup Media**

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a limit on the length of time backup copies of electronic mail messages are maintained by the University of North Dakota (UND). It is also in place to encourage users and e-mail system administrators to distinguish the difference between the record-copy of an e-mail (the responsibility of the end-user) and the restoration-only backup copy (the responsibility of the system administrators).

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## BACKGROUND

The process of backing up electronic records is an essential information technology practice to insure against the loss of valuable information. The main purpose of backup media is to restore a system to a current state (as of the date of the most recent backup) in case of system failure, in the event of a disaster.

Backup media is not intended to serve as short or long term storage of information, nor is it intended to be used as the record copy under UND's Records Retention Schedule.

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## POLICY STATEMENTS

### **Retention of Backup Media**

Backups of e-mail messages should be retained for no more than 15 days, regardless of the location or method of backup (server, database, tape, etc.). This allotted period of time provides for a reasonable level of insurance against major data losses.

### **Procedures for Backup**

Backups should be run on a daily basis (Monday – Sunday). Each backup version should be kept for a period of 15 days and at the end of that 15-day life cycle, the backup version should be recycled and recorded over.

System administrators should establish procedures so that the users "Trash" or "Deleted Items" folders are not a part of the backup process.

Permanent deletion of E-mail that is downloaded to a user's local computer is the responsibility of that user.

**Record Copy of E-mail**

Each employee of the University of North Dakota is responsible for the maintenance, classification, retention, and disposition of official e-mail records. A separate policy has been created to address the issues of how to effectively manage those records. See Policy for the Retention of Electronic Mail (E-mail): Office of Record.

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