

Office of Information Affairs

Capstone Officials Quick Guide

Capstone Officials are senior officials (e.g., those high on the organization chart) generally responsible for agency and program policy and mission-related actions. Capstone officials vary by agency depending on an agency's organization and how it carries out agency roles. The emails associated with these accounts are considered permanent and will not be deleted.

See below a summary for managing email and electronic messaging as a Capstone Official.

- ✓ Email is a form of government communication and may contain official records that the Department is obligated to retain. If you have questions about identifying Federal Records, please contact your Agency Records Officer (ARO).
- ✓ As a Capstone Official, your email records will be kept permanently. We will automatically hold them at the Department for 15 years, then their ownership will be transferred from USDA to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in a process called "accessioning".
- ✓ Federal Records – including those contained in your emails – are the property of the Department. *We rely on you to identify personal emails, so they are not accessioned to NARA.*
- ✓ Even if you choose to delete an email, a copy will remain in the system. It is not really deleted.
- ✓ Do not use the regular email system for classified information. There are special systems set up for classified discussions. Your Security Office and Information Technology (IT) department can assist you with access to classified systems.
- ✓ Only use official accounts to conduct agency business. If extenuating circumstances require the use of a personal account, you must carbon copy or forward the communications to your official account in the Department's infrastructure within 20 days ([Public Law 113-187](#)). [Departmental Regulation DR 3080-001](#), Records Management, Appendix C, provides more information.
- ✓ Use official agency messaging accounts (such as the official Twitter account) when using electronic messaging applications to create or send a Federal record, in accordance with the Departmental Regulation DR 3080-001, Records Management, Appendix C.

For any questions, contact the Departmental Records Program:

Departmental Records Officer (DRO) Beatriz Collazo, at Beatriz.Collazo@usda.gov, or USDADepartmentalRecords@usda.gov.