



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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JAN 16 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERSONNEL

SUBJECT: Conducting Official Business on Electronic Messaging Accounts

Appointment to Federal office in the DoD entails enormous responsibility for safeguarding our people, data, and public trust. In order to preserve the integrity, security, and accountability of Department operations, and to comply with the law, I expect all DoD personnel to use their official DoD email or other official DoD electronic messaging accounts when conducting DoD business.

Law and DoD policy are clear: “non-official electronic messaging accounts,” including personal email accounts, must not be used to conduct official DoD communications, with very few exceptions,¹ and intentional violations of this may be the basis for disciplinary action. Personal or other non-official email accounts may be used for official business only in those rare and extraordinary situations where an official email capability is not available. (For example, an extraordinary circumstance could be when a DoD official is out of the office without access to official communication channels and must send an urgent DoD mission-related email.) When this happens, the DoD official shall copy his official email account at the time of sending or forward the message to his official account within 20 days of sending the email. In doing so, the sender shall mitigate against transmitting non-public or controlled unclassified information. Classified information may never be transmitted over any unclassified networks, whether DoD or commercial.

I expect leaders at every level within the Department to set a personal example and to ensure that those they lead uphold these responsibilities. We must be vigilant to protect DoD information and ensure the transparency that the law requires. I trust each of you to never forget the obligation we have to each other and the Nation we protect.

¹ See 44 U.S. Code § 2911; Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 5015.02, “DoD Records Management Program,” Feb. 24, 2015, as amended; DoDI 8550.01, “DoD Internet Services and Internet-Based Capabilities,” Sept. 11, 2012; Memorandum from DoD Chief Information Officer, “Use of Non-Official Electronic Messaging Accounts and Records Management,” Apr. 6, 2016.

