

# ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

## *Policies and Procedures*

**Title:** Domestic & International Electronic Mail

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This DIRECTIVE states policy and provides guidelines for using electronic mail in ARS.

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## 1. REFERENCES

Directive 251.8, Records Disposition explains ARS retention requirements for electronic records.

Directive 253.1, Security of Classified Material, prohibits the transmission of classified documents and information on electronic mail networks.

Directive 253.2, "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" Material, explains ARS policy for protecting sensitive information.

## 2. SUMMARY

This DIRECTIVE states policy and provides guidelines for using electronic mail in ARS.

Electronic mail provides for the timely distribution of information. Electronic mail is cost effective when:

- there is an immediate need to exchange information and the use of regular mail or messenger channels will not suffice, and
- electronically transmitting documents, eliminates rekeying of that document by the recipients.

## 3. ABBREVIATIONS

- ACS - Area Computer Specialist
- ISTD - Information Systems and Technology Division
- TASSB - Technology Assessment and Support Services Branch

## 4. DEFINITIONS

**Electronic Mail (E-mail)** - Computer-based system for preparing, sending, and receiving messages electronically.

**FTS2000Mail** - The domestic electronic mail system used by ARS.

**FTS2000 Coordinator** - The person who manages the FTS2000 system for ARS users.

**I-Net** - The USDA International electronic mail system used by ARS. This service is provided by Sprint through the I-Net contract.

**I-Net Administrator** - The person who manages the I-Net system for ARS users.

**Distribution List** - Group of I-Net mailboxes sharing one common address to which a message can be sent to all members on the list at one time.

**Mailing List** - Group of FTS2000 Mail boxes sharing one common address to which a message can be sent to all members on the list at one time.

**Shared Folder** - Message area, on FTS2000 MAIL, accessed by a group of users for posting and reading messages of interest to a group.

**User Name (sometimes referred to as mailbox)**, Approved addresses stored in the central computer for individuals, locations, or organizational units. Messages are sent to and retrieved from mailboxes.

**Password** - A security code assigned by AT&T for FTS2000 MAIL system or selected by the users for I-Net as their identification. Passwords permit access to the electronic mail system for a specific mailbox.

## 5. AUTHORITY

DR-3300-3 - Electronic Mail

## 6. POLICY

It is ARS policy to:

Use electronic mail to send messages to individuals, locations, and organizational units when information must be received quickly.

Distribute electronic mail messages as necessary in order to conduct business in a cost-effective manner.

Maintain a mailbox at each ARS Location as part of the Agency communications network.

Provide employees who are on travel or whose work site is at a non-FTS2000 telephone site an FTS2000 MAIL packet Async ID. These employees use 1800-538-6334 or 1-800-525-0216 to access FTS2000 MAIL.

Incorporate Agency policy statements sent as FTS200Mail messages in Agency directives as soon as possible.

## 7. RESPONSIBILITIES

**ISTD-TASSB** will:

- Function as the Agency I-Net Administrator and FTS2000 MAIL Coordinator.
- Establish mailboxes, distribution lists, and shared folders for the electronic mail systems. Make appropriate additions, deletions, and changes.
- Provide a directory of mailboxes, shared folders and distribution lists.
- Provide assistance and instructions to electronic mail system users.
- Monitor the use of electronic mail in ARS.
- Serve as liaison with the Department on all matters concerning USDA electronic mail systems.
- Coordinate any change or addition to our FTS2000 MAIL system for the Headquarters staffs.

**Area Computer Specialists** will:

- Provide technical support to field offices in their Areas.
- Coordinate any changes or additions to the FTS2000 MAIL system for their Areas.
- Forward changes and additions to ISTD-TASSB.
- Maintain a mailbox to create Area-wide mailing lists and shared folders.
- **Headquarters, Areas, and Locations** will:
- Obtain equipment to access electronic mail systems.

- Access electronic mailboxes periodically to ensure that messages are retrieved in a timely manner.
- Ensure only authorized personnel access electronic mail systems. Control passwords and advise ISTD-TASSB or ACS to add or delete mailboxes, mailing lists, and distribution lists as requirements and personnel change.
- Ensure proper distribution of all messages.

**Supervisors** will:

- Notify ISTD or ACS when an employee leaves ARS.
- Limit use to official business.

**Users** need to keep passwords secure and limit use to official business.

## 8. COST CONSIDERATIONS

Before using electronic mail on a routine basis, consider all costs involved understanding that use of special features may be expensive. Electronic mail costs include:

- message charges,
- communications cost,
- message storage cost, and
- connect costs.

Cost tables are shown in Exhibits 1 and 2.

## 9. ARS SHARED FOLDERS AND HQSAREASLOC MAILING LIST

Prior to posting messages to the ARS shared folders and/or sending messages to the HQSAREASLOC mailing list approval/clearance must be obtained from:

- **Field** Area Director or Area Administrative Officer.
- **Headquarters**
  - The Administrator; Associate Administrator
  - Deputy Administrator or Associate Deputy Administrators, National Programs Staff;

- Assistant Administrator, Office of Technology Transfer;
- Chief, Civil Rights Staff;
- Chief, Legislative Staff;
- Director, Budget and Program Management Staff;
- Assistant Administrator, Office of International Research Programs;
- Deputy and Associate Deputy Administrator, Administrative Management;
- Division and Staff Directors, Administrative Management.

To have access to ARS shared folders and to receive notice of new item in the shared folder, at the "Command Prompt" enter: **Subscribe to (name of shared folder)**

**For Example !USDA:JOBS**

## 10. REQUESTS FOR ELECTRONIC MAILBOXES AND DISTRIBUTION LISTS

Each ARS organizational unit has an electronic mailbox for the unit and individuals in that unit. In addition, personal-name mailboxes can be assigned but should be limited to:

- individuals in a management or leadership capacity,
- individuals who travel frequently,
- individuals in special positions requiring electronic mail facilities, and
- members of ad hoc groups such as task forces or committees.

ARS organizational units or individuals should contact ISTD-TASSB to request additions, changes, or deletions to mailboxes, mailing lists and distribution lists. Inform your ACS with courtesy copy on FTS2000 MAIL.

## 11. PASSWORDS

Periodically, the I-Net system will request users to change passwords.

- The user can change the password anytime using an available command. The I-NET system will guide the user through this procedure.

- Establishing an FTS2000 MAIL user name automatically creates a password. This password does not change unless a formal request is submitted to the FTS2000 MAIL Coordinator, ISTD.

## 12. GUIDELINES

User manuals are available from I-Net. The materials listed below can be ordered free from I-Net using the COMPOSE DOCUMENTATION command.

- Step Down Guides (Basic, Advanced, Editing)
- Sprintmail Quick Reference Guide
- Sprint U.S. Access Telephone Numbers
- Sprintmail Tutorial (diskette)

Mailbox names can also be checked by using the online directory system for FTS2000 MAIL.

## 13. REPORTING I-Net or FTS2000 MAIL PROBLEMS

A user should contact the Area Computer Specialist or ISTD to resolve problems.

## 14. RECORDS MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Transitory materials usually have a records retention period of less than 6 months. Program and general administrative records are nontransitory and have a longer retention period.

When records of a nontransitory nature are sent via the electronic mail system, a hard or electronic copy of the message should be retained according to the Records Control Schedule, (see DIRECTIVE 251.8). This is to preserve the integrity of the files and provide for an "audit trail," if required. Records of a transitory nature should be deleted/purged as soon as practicable from the electronic mail system.

The following materials can be transmitted via electronic mail if precautions have been taken to ensure that access to the information is limited to the appropriate individuals:

- "For Official Use Only" material (see DIRECTIVE 253.2).
- Records subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act.



The following types of materials cannot be transmitted via electronic mail:

- Defense classified material (see DIRECTIVE 253.1).
- Other material specifically designated not to be transmitted via electronic mail, designated by written or stamped comment.

JANE L. GILES  
Deputy Administrator  
Administrative Management

Exhibits:  
1 FTS2000 Costs  
2 I-Net (Sprintmail) Costs

## FT82000Mail Costs

1. **Mailbox (username)** - There is no charge to setup a mailbox. However, there is a \$3.50 per month charge for an enhanced mailbox for selected users to establish and manage shared folders.
2. **Access charges**
  - a 5 cents per minute connect charge for FTS2000 MAIL system.
  - b There is an additional fee for communications to FTS2000 MAIL. Examples are X.25, FTS2000 MAIL Dial, Packet Async Dial, etc.
3. **Message charges**
  - a 21 cents per message when sent to another FTS2000 MAIL or commercial mail system mailbox.
  - b 30 cents additional per message for requested return receipt.
  - c 48 cents per message sent to Internet or private mail systems. Example is The Forest Service internal mail system.
  - d 18 cents per message read from a shared folder.
4. **Storage Charges**
  - a 4.4 cents per 1000 characters (including spaces) after the 6th day of storage.
  - b \$1.07 per month for a Mailing List.
5. **Domestic Telex Charge** - 65 cents per minute.
6. **Fax Messages (Enhanced Users only)**
  - a 42 cents per first ½ page.
  - b 30 cents per additional ½ page.

### **I-Net (Sprintmail) Costs**

1. **Mailbox (username)** - There is no charge to setup a mailbox.
2. **Access Charges**
  - a \$11.64 per hour connect charge for Domestic users.
  - b For users accessing I-Net mailboxes from a foreign country charges will vary depending on the country.
  - c No additional charge for sending to a FTS2000 mailbox.
  - d 10 cents per 1000 characters to send a message to an Internet mailbox.
3. **Storage Charges**

.006 cents per 1000 characters stored. This storage charge begins 5 days after a message is read or 60 days after a message is received but has not been read.
4. **International Telex Charges**

These charges depend on the country you are sending the message to. The charges range from 65 cents to \$5. To obtain a copy of this listing please contact your Area Computer Specialist or TASSB.
5. **Fax**

These charges depend on the country you are sending the message to. The charges range from 65 cents to \$5. To obtain a copy of this listing please contact your Area Computer Specialist or TASSB.