



# Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd.

Building & Civil Engineering Contractors

## *Email Use Policy*

### Introduction

Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd makes email available to its employees where relevant and useful for their jobs.

This email use policy describes the rules governing email use at the company. It also sets out how employees are expected to behave when using email.

This policy should be read alongside other key policies. The company's data protection and internet use policies are particularly relevant.

### Why this policy exists

Email is a standard way to communicate in business. It's used widely and is arguably just as important as the telephone.

Like any technology, email can cause difficulties if used incorrectly or inappropriately.

This email use policy:

- Reduces the **security and business risks** faced by Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd
- Lets employees know **how they are permitted to use company email**
- Ensures employees follow **good email etiquette**
- Helps the company **satisfy its legal obligations** regarding email use

### Policy Scope

This policy applies to all employees and contractors at Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd who use the company email system.

It applies, regardless of where that email takes place: on company premises, while travelling on company business or while working from home.

It applies to use of company email on any device that is owned by the company or employee.



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### General email Guidelines

#### Company email use

Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd recognises that email is a key communication tool. It encourages its employees to use email whenever appropriate.

For instance, employees may use email to:

- Communicate with customers and suppliers
- Market the company's products
- Distribute information to colleagues

#### Personal use of email

The company also recognises that email is an important tool in many people's daily lives. As such, it allows employees to use their company email account for personal reasons, with the following stipulations.

- Personal email use should be of a reasonable level and restricted to non work times, such as breaks or during lunch.
- All rules described in this policy apply equally to personal email use. For instance, inappropriate content is always inappropriate, no matter whether it is being sent or received for business or personal reasons.
- Personal email use must not affect the email service available to other people in the company. For instance, sending exceptionally large files by email could slow access for other employees.
- Users may access their own personal email accounts at work, if they can do so via our internet connection. For instance, a staff member may check their Yahoo, Google or Hotmail accounts during their lunch break.

#### Authorised Users

Only people who have been authorised to use email at Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd may do so.

Authorisation is usually provided by an employee's line manager. It is typically granted when a new employee joins the company and is assigned their login details for the company IT systems.

Unauthorised use of the company's email system is prohibited.

Employees who use the company email without authorisation – or who provide access to unauthorised people – may have disciplinary action taken against them.



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### Key Areas

#### Email Security

Used inappropriately, email can be a source of security problems for the company. Users of the company email system must not:

- Open email attachments from unknown sources, in case they contain a virus, Trojan, spyware or other malware.
- Disable security or email scanning software. These tools are essential to protect the company from security problems.
- Send confidential company data via email to external organisations.
- Access another user's company email account. If they require access to a specific message (for instance, while an employee is off sick), they should approach the HR Manager or Technical Coordinator for access.

Employees must always consider the security of the company's systems and data when using email. If required, help and guidance is available from the Technical Coordinator or HR Manager.

Users should note that email is not inherently secure. Most emails transmitted over the internet are sent in plain text. This means they are vulnerable to interception.

Although such interceptions are rare, it's best to regard email as an open communication system, not suitable for confidential messages and information.

#### Inappropriate email content and use

The company email system must not be used to send or store inappropriate content or materials.

It is important employees understand that viewing or distributing inappropriate content via email is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Users must not:

- Write or send emails that might be defamatory or incur liability for the company.
- Create or distribute any inappropriate content or material via email.

*Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs.*

*The definition of inappropriate content or materials also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.*

- Use email for any illegal or criminal activities
- Send offensive or harassing emails to others.



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- Send emails or material that could damage Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd's image or reputation.

Any user who receives an email they consider to be inappropriate should report this to their line manager.

### Copyright

Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use the company email share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless permitted by that third party.

Employees must not use the company's email system to perform any tasks that may involve breach of copyright law.

Users should keep in mind that the copyright on letters, files and other documents attached to emails may be owned by the email sender, or by a third party. Forwarding such emails on to other people may breach this copyright.

### Contracts and Liability

Users must be careful about making commitments or agreeing to purchase via email.

An email message may form a legally binding contract between Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd and the recipient – even if the user has not obtained proper authorisation within the company.

### Email disclaimer

The standard company email template includes an email disclaimer. Users must not remove or change this when they send emails. – Suggested example below:

Full Name

Job Title



Telephone: (01579)362630

Fax: (01579) 364098

Web: [www.shc-ltd.co.uk](http://www.shc-ltd.co.uk)

### IMPORTANT:

This email and any attachments are confidential and are solely intended for the above named addressee. Any offer or proposal contained within this email does not constitute a contract. Access to this email by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this email in error, please notify your system manager and the sender of the above email. The views expressed in this email are those of the author and do not



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necessarily reflect the views of SHC Ltd.

### Email best practice

#### Email etiquette

Email is often used to communicate with customers, partners and other important contacts. Although a relatively informal medium, employees should be aware that each email they send does affect the company's image and reputation.

It's a good idea to follow rules of good email etiquette. Users must:

- Not forward on chain emails or humorous messages. These clog up peoples in boxes and some topics are not appropriate for the workplace.
- Always use a meaningful subject line rather than leaving it blank or using a single word like 'hello'.
- Only use the 'high importance' message setting sparingly for messages that really are important.
- Never ask recipients to send a 'message read' receipt. Many people find these annoying and not all email services support them.
- Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS in messages or subject lines. This can be perceived as impolite and that someone is 'shouting'.
- Be sparing with group messages, only adding recipients who will find the message genuinely relevant or useful.
- Use the 'cc' (carbon copy) button field sparingly. If someone really needs to receive a message, they should be included in the 'to' field.
- Use the 'bcc' (blind carbon copy) button field to send group messages where appropriate. It stops an email recipient seeing who else was on the email.

#### Internal email

Email is a valid way to communicate with colleagues. However, it tends to be overused for internal communication.

Users should keep these points in mind when emailing colleagues:

- Would the issue be better addressed face-to-face or by a telephone call?
- Is email the best way to send a document out for discussion? Often, it becomes very hard to keep track of feedback and versions.
- It's rarely necessary to 'reply all'. Usually, it's better to reply and then manually add other people who need to see the message.

### Policy enforcement

#### Monitoring email use



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The company email system and software are provided for legitimate business use.

The company therefore reserves the right to monitor employee's use of email.

Any such examinations or monitoring will only be carried out by authorised staff.

Additionally, all emails sent or received through the company's email system are part of official Steve Hoskin Construction Ltd records. The company can be legally compelled to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

Users should always ensure that the business information sent via email is accurate, appropriate, ethical and legal.

### **Potential Sanctions**

Knowingly breaching this email use policy is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees, contractors and other users may also be held personally liable for violating this policy.

Where appropriate, the company will involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of this policy.

However, the Company is unlikely to take formal action if a user fails to adhere to the guidelines in the 'email best practice' section.