

Theresa Masse

Authorized Signature

Number: AS-AR-04-001

Issue Date: 03/29/2004

Topic: Agency-wide Policy

Due Date: 04/30/2004

Subject: Sending Confidential Information Via GroupWise E-mail System

Applies to (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |

Action Required: DHS Managers: Please ensure that you provide instruction on the following information to all of the staff you supervise.

Reason for Action: This Action Request was developed in response to reports of several misdirected E-mail messages that contained confidential client information.

Field/Stakeholder review: Yes No

If yes, reviewed by:

If you have any questions about this action request, contact:

Contact(s):	Jane Alm, DHS Privacy Officer		
Phone:	503-947-5255	Fax:	503-947-5396
E-mail:	jane.alm@state.or.us		

**Department of Human Services
Information Security Office
Action Request**

March 29, 2004

DHS Managers: Please ensure that you provide instruction on the following information to all of the staff you supervise.

Sending Confidential Information Via GroupWise E-mail System

The DHS Information Security Office recently received reports of several misdirected E-mail messages that contained confidential client information. The messages were meant for DHS staff persons having almost the same name as someone at another state agency. DHS staff names are not segregated from all the other state agencies within the GroupWise system.

This type of event, while inadvertent and unintended, constitutes a disclosure of confidential client information to an outside source. The Information Security Office responds to unauthorized use or disclosure of client information by informing the client of the breach, and by informing DHS Human Resources and the manager of the staff person responsible.

The Department has legal and ethical responsibility to protect confidential client information to the greatest extent possible, and in the same manner we expect our own confidential information to be protected. Sending confidential client information to anyone internally (DHS) or externally who does not have a right and need to know violates federal and state regulations and DHS policies.

DHS policy AS-100-09 describes enforcement, sanctions and penalties for DHS employees who violate policies and procedures regarding the safeguarding of an individual's information. The individual has the right to pursue legal action against the State of Oregon or to file a lawsuit against the DHS employee responsible for the confidentiality breach.

It is recommended that managers review the following policies with their staff:

[AS-100-03 Uses and Disclosures of Client or Participant Information](#)

[AS-070-001 Electronic Mail Access and Use](#)

[AS-100-09 Enforcement, Sanctions, and Penalties for Violations of Individual Privacy](#)

Here are some suggestions to reduce the risk of misdirecting a confidential E-mail message:

1. GroupWise is set to default to "Frequent Contacts." If a message has been sent even once to an incorrect recipient, that name will automatically come up again when typing in the intended similar name.
2. Correcting the name in the "To" section of the message will not change what is stored in the "Frequent Contacts."
3. Delete your "Frequent Contacts" periodically.
4. When choosing a name from the "Address Book", highlight it, then scroll to the right and/or click on "Information" to ensure that you have selected the intended recipient.

What to do if you realize that you have sent an E-mail containing confidential information to the wrong person:

- Immediately delete the message
 - Go into "Sent Mail"
 - Highlight and right click on the message

- Left click on “Delete” (The “Delete” option only works within the GroupWise system and will not delete a message sent outside of the system)
- Left click on “All Mailboxes”
- Phone or email anyone outside the GroupWise system who may have received the misdirected confidential E-mail message. Instruct them to delete it from their E-mail system
- Resend the message only after ensuring you have the intended recipient
- Notify your manager of the incident and what you did to correct it
- Notify the Information Security Office by forwarding the misdirected message to dhs.privacyhelp@state.or.us, **unless** the receiver was **within the GroupWise system**, and you are **certain** that the message was deleted before it was viewed
- If the message was sent **outside of the GroupWise system**, notify the Information Security Office by forwarding the misdirected message to dhs.privacyhelp@state.or.us

What to do if you receive a misdirected E-mail containing confidential information:

- Notify the sender immediately so the message can be deleted from all mailboxes.
- Notify the Information Security Office by forwarding the misdirected message to dhs.privacyhelp@state.or.us
- Comply with DHS confidentiality policies by not disclosing the information any further.

If you have questions regarding this message you may contact Jane Alm at 503-947-5255 or jane.alm@state.or.us.