

Storage of E-mail Messages Using Microsoft Outlook

Electronic mail (e-mail), created or maintained by public agencies, meets the statutory definition of a public record in Kentucky (see [KRS 171.410](#)). Because e-mail messages are public records, they are subject to the same open records requirements as any of the agency's other public records. E-mail messages that are available for public inspection, must remain accessible during their *entire* retention period. For most e-mail records that retention period will be relatively short, from a few weeks to 2 years. Some e-mail, however, must be retained long-term, from 2 years to permanent. The retention period for e-mail records is found in the agency's records retention schedules and the *General Schedule for State Agencies* or the *Local Government General Records Schedule*. All e-mail, regardless of the retention period, should be maintained in a manner which permits efficient and timely retrieval. A more detailed discussion of the management issues concerning e-mail is covered in the, *Guidelines for Managing E-mail in Kentucky Government*.

The current State IT Enterprise Architecture Standard for e-mail applications in state agencies is Microsoft Outlook/Exchange. Outlook is an extremely versatile application that not only allows users to send, receive, and store e-mail messages, but also allows for task scheduling, calendar features, and contact management (address book). Outlook possesses limited document management capabilities which means that e-mail messages can be stored and managed in Outlook with minimal effect on the overall performance of the application.

The following procedures will help guide state, and local, agencies using Microsoft Outlook, in the use of the foldering and "archiving" features of Outlook/Exchange to manage their e-mail messages. This is an appropriate strategy for preservation of **short-term messages**, messages with retention periods of 2 years or less. The Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) and the Commonwealth Office for Technology (GOT) are investigating procedures for use on longer-term records.

1. Filing Structures

All agencies need to establish logical and coherent filing structures that establish procedures for creating folders on the agency's network drive(s). An organized system of folders helps individuals in separating and classifying informational, temporary, and permanent records and can help ensure that important records are not accidentally lost or misplaced. Employees need to be trained in how to create folders in Outlook and where to place the folders on the network drive(s).

These folders should **not** be located on the individual's workstation, because this is not a secure location and is not backed-up to protect from accidental loss. The folders should also not be located in the Outlook "In-box." These folders should be located in the "Personal folders" section created for that individual located on the agency network drive(s). Agencies should utilize their IT staff to assist with the proper placement of Outlook folders.

An example of an agency filing structure for e-mail. The records series numbers, from the *General Schedule for State Agencies**, are provided in parentheses.

NON-BUSINESS RELATED MESSAGES – (M0059) Delete immediately

Personal Messages – (An agency appropriate use policy should detail the amount of personal messages allowed on the e-mail system.)

Unsolicited e-mail
“Spam”

INFORMATIONAL AND REFERENCE MATERIAL – (M0018) Delete when no longer useful.

Drafts – Publications, Reports, Memos
Meeting Notices
Listserv Messages

SHORT-TERM MESSAGES – Delete per Retention Schedule*

General Correspondence (M0002 – delete after 2 years)

Project 1
Project 2
Person A (Supervisor)
Person B (Co-worker)

Activity Reports (M0029 – delete after 2 years)

PERMANENT MESSAGES – (As defined by retention schedules*)
Check with agency records officer for appropriate handling procedures.

Official Correspondence (M0001 – usually from agency or division head)

Project A
Project B

Annual or Summary Reports (M0022)

Policies and Procedures (M0003 – final copy)

Meeting Minutes (Board or Commission) (M0008)

*These examples come from the *General Schedules for State Agencies*, more records categories can be found in the agency-specific schedule.

2. Procedures for On-line storage of E-mail Messages

AutoArchive is an Outlook tool that helps manage the size of a mail box by allowing a user to delete unwanted messages or save the messages you want to keep to a drive of your choice, instead of letting them take up space on the mail server. You choose where you want your e-mail messages to be saved and how often you would like AutoArchive to run, and your messages are deleted or saved automatically. The default option is to the computer's hard drive. In a networked environment, this option should be changed to a shared network drive to ensure proper backup and security. In the Exchange environment, these features can be set at the administrator level.

AutoArchive is on by default and runs automatically at scheduled intervals (the default is 14 days), clearing out old and expired items from folders. Old items are those that reach the age specified. Expired items are mail and meeting items whose content is no longer valid after a certain date (the disposition date on the records retention schedule.) For messages considered general correspondence, this is 2 years (24 months).

What AutoArchive does with items

AutoArchive can do one or both of the following for items in a folder: Permanently delete expired items; move old items to an archive file. The archive* file is a special type of data file. The first time AutoArchive runs, Outlook creates the archive file automatically. After Outlook archives items for the first time, you can access items in the file directly from **Archive Folders** in your Outlook **Folder List**. If you want, you can have separate archive files for individual folders.

When you open **Archive Folders**, you'll see that Outlook maintains your existing folder structure. If there is a parent folder above the folder you chose to archive, the parent folder is created in the archive file, but items within the parent folder are not archived. In this way, an identical folder structure exists between the archive file and your mailbox. Folders are left in place after being archived, even if they are empty. You work with the items the same way you work with items in your main mailbox. If you decide you want archived items moved back into your main mailbox, you can import all the items from the archive file into their original folders or into other folders you specify, or you can manually move or copy individual items.

AutoArchive is a powerful tool and all employees with access to email should be trained in using it. Improper use of AutoArchive can lead to messages being deleted before the retention period has expired, or messages being unintentionally retained without knowledge of the user. (Ask employees how many times they have seen the prompt – “Do you want to AutoArchive you old time now?” Then ask them how many times they have hit “OK” or “Yes” without fully knowing what it means.)

Setting up AutoArchive

There are two sets of AutoArchive settings: global settings and per-folder settings.

* “Archive” in the context of this document refers to the movement of data from an active file to a less active file for the purpose of freeing up space. It has nothing to do with how long the data is retained and does not refer to “archive” in context of the record retention schedules which is to retain records permanently for historical research purposes.

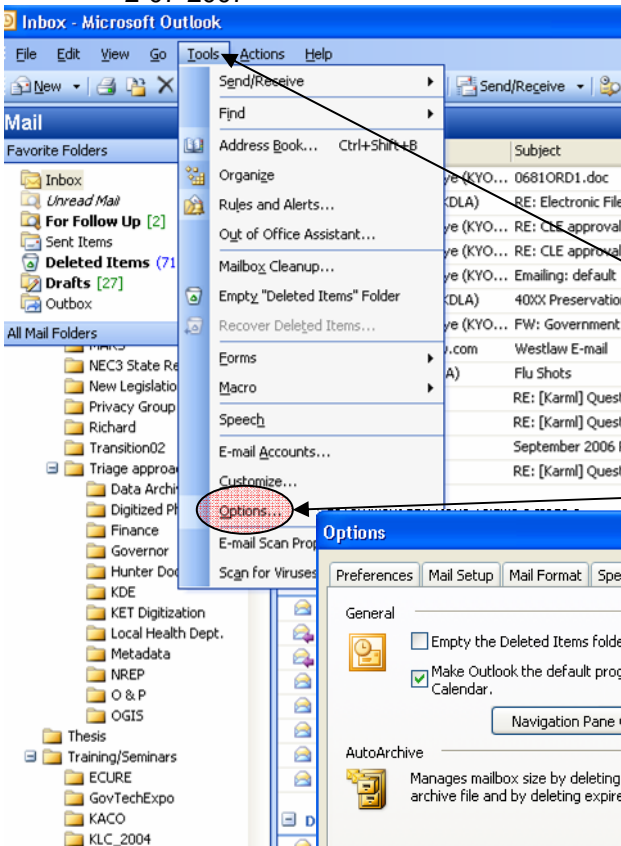
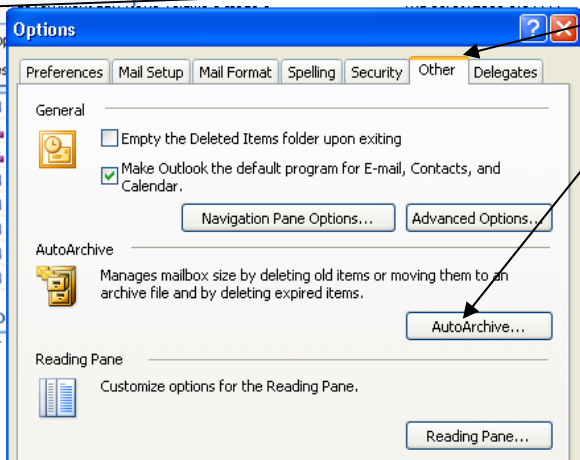


Figure 1.1: The **global settings** — called default settings — determine whether AutoArchive runs at all and what it does by default with the items in any Outlook folder (except **Contacts**, which is not affected by AutoArchive).

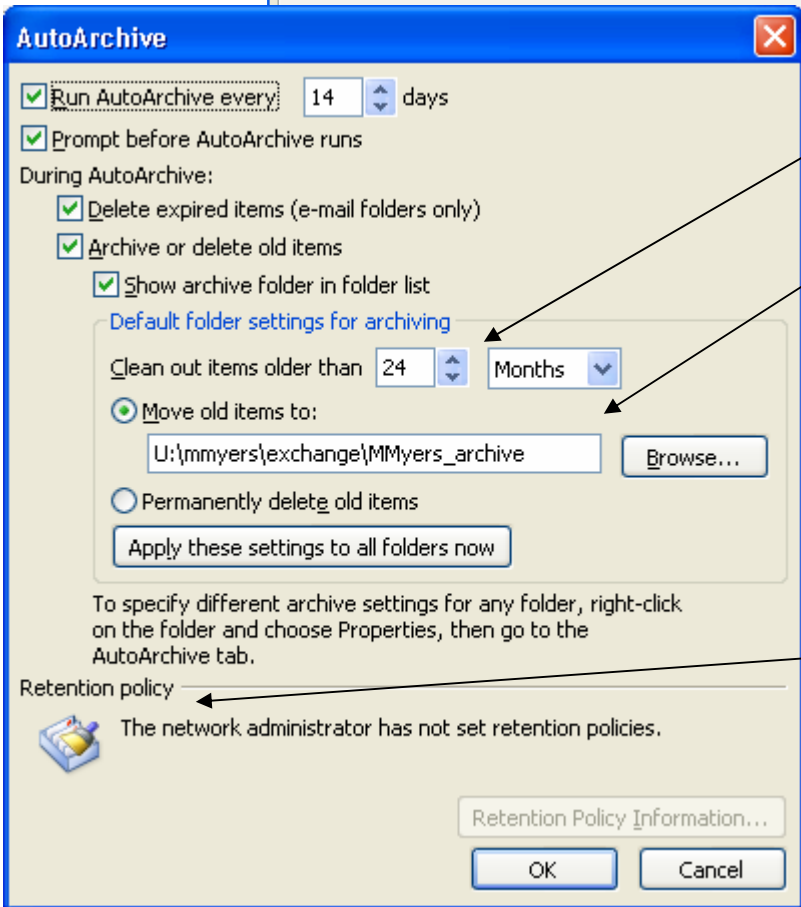
To specify default AutoArchive settings for all Outlook folders: AutoArchive is turned on by default. However, you can change its default settings.

1. On the **Tools** menu,
2. click **Options**,
3. and then click the **Other** tab.
4. Click **AutoArchive**.
5. With "Run AutoArchive every 'n' days" selected, specify how often to run AutoArchive.
6. Select the options that you want.



With the AutoArchive box open you can customize the settings to meet agency needs. For example:

1. Delete messages after a specified time following the records retention schedules.
2. Move messages to an archive located at a specific drive. Agencies should locate archive folders on shared network drives.



Note: These are the global default settings for all email folders and will run anytime AutoArchive runs. To see how customize settings for individual folders, see below.

Agencies can implement and enforce the AutoArchive features on the administrator level with the **Retention policy** options.

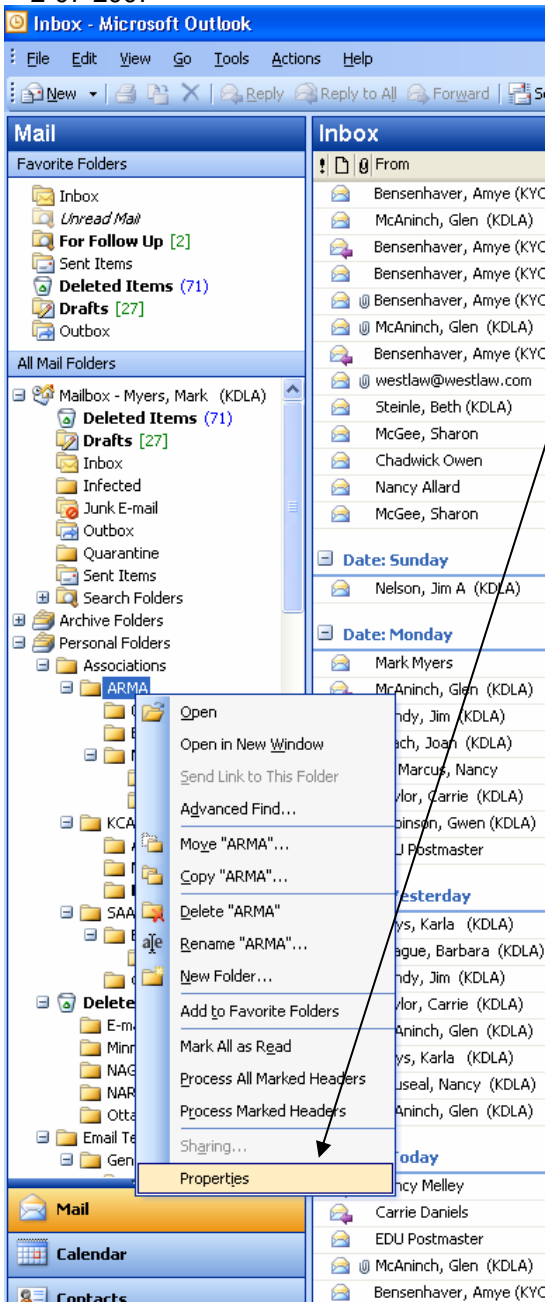
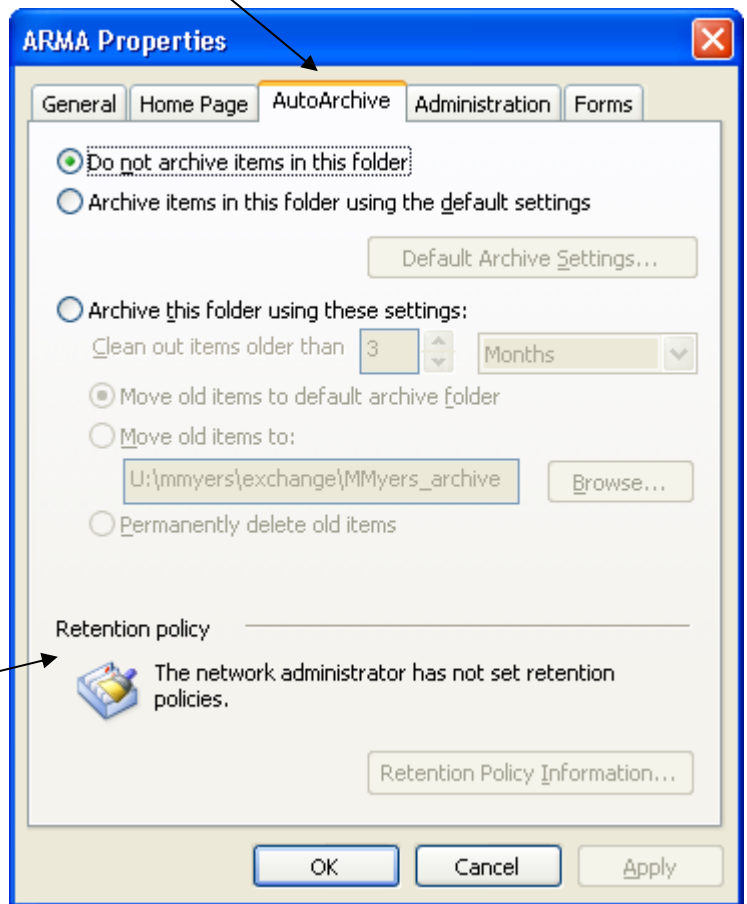


Figure 1.2 AutoArchive settings for individual folders

1. In the **Folder List**, right-click the folder you want to specify settings for, and then click **Properties** on the shortcut menu.
2. Click the **AutoArchive** tab.
 - Specify whether you want to archive this folder and if so, whether to use the default AutoArchive settings or your own settings. For Help on an option, click the question mark, and then click the option.
 - To archive to a file other than the default one, specify a different file name in the **Move old items to** box. The next time AutoArchive runs on this folder, Outlook will automatically create the new archive file for items in this folder.



Again, the network administrator can set network settings for individual folders using the "Retention Policy" settings.

