Business Communications IV: Appropriate & Inappropriate Uses of Email, Texts & Letters

June 2014

National Association of Elevator Contractors
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About this Study Guide

This guide is intended to supplement your individualized Skillsoft learning by providing materials and examples specific to the vertical transport industry.

The content of this guide helps you determine appropriate ways to use email, text messages and letters in business. It also outlines inappropriate uses of these communication methods.

Information included in this study guide is intended for educational purposes only. Check with your company for specific guidelines.
Appropriate Use

The following are appropriate uses of email, text and letters:

- All digital and other communication are limited to the use of official business.
- All digital and other communication write in a formal business tone and avoid abbreviations.
- File all digital and other communication according to company policy to comply with archival rules and legal rules for record keeping.
- If you will be away from accessing your email for a day or longer, set up an “out of office” message.
- Be concise in all digital and other communication.
- Be precise and proof read all your digital and other communication.
- Copy and paste phone numbers in text messages where possible for best accuracy.
- Sign your name to text messages; do not assume your phone number will be recognized.
- Address digital and other communication to a specific person.
- Conduct your digital and other correspondence in a timely fashion.
Inappropriate Use

The following are inappropriate uses of email, text and letters:

- **Accessing a personal email account during your lunch break using company equipment and expecting that communication to be private.**
  - This is an inappropriate expectation because you are using company resources and therefore nothing is private.

- **Sending a series of text messages to clarify an issue to a colleague.**
  - If you have to send more than one text message, an email is the more appropriate format.

- **Using your company email address for online shopping or to set up non-work-related online accounts.**
  - Remember that your company email address is expressly for company work-related issues only.

- **Repliesing to texts and emails by simply stating “thanks” or “ok.”**
  - Generally, do not waste the recipient’s time with such a short text unless it is important to show that you have received the message.

- **Permanently deleting email correspondence according to your preference.**
  - Follow company guidelines on the storage and archival of company information, including digital and other communication. Do not delete communication based solely on your preferences because that communication could represent legal records that need to be preserved.

- **Sending late-night texts.**
  - Assume a text is like a phone call and follow the same etiquette about not disturbing a client or colleague after work hours.

- **Circulating a humorous or sarcastically-toned email or letter.**
  - Not only can humor and sarcasm be variously interpreted by different readers, but they rarely have any place in business writing. In short, writing humor or sarcasm is asking for trouble.

- **Forwarding or quoting messages or passages in letters without permission from the other author.**
  - Always seek permission from the original author before including them in your new record.

- **Sending mass telemarketing text messages to potential new clients without their written consent.**
  - As of October 16, 2013, prior express written consent is required before sending telemarketing text messages to recipients. Failure to comply could result in steep fines.

- **Texting with non-work-related colleagues or clients.**
  - You should only use the texting function at work for work-related issues.