

1. THE GOLDEN RULE: IF YOU SEND IT TO ONE COMMISSIONER, SEND IT TO ALL. All Commissioners must have access to and be sent the same information whether you think they want it or not. This is our #1 Communication Protocol.

2. Procedures concerning specific types of Commission correspondence:

a. If you are sending it to the Commission, ALWAYS copy the County Manager, the County Attorney and the Department Director.

b. Commission requested major reports, responses to Commission assignments, or any unsolicited Commission correspondence must be approved and signed-off-on by the preparers and the department director, and then routed to the County Manager who will forward it to the Commission (via the County Manager). The County Attorney and Department Director must also be copied as well as any County Manager's Office staff that you deem appropriate, i.e. the Assistant County Managers if related to their responsibilities, the OMB Director if budget related, the Communications and Legislative Affairs Director if legislative in nature, etc. If there is any doubt about an item requiring this forwarding, call the County Manager for clarification.

c. If you receive a specific request from a Commissioner, make sure that the Manager was copied on the request. If the Manager was not copied, the e-mail must be forwarded to the Manager for review. If the Manager wishes to review the response before it is sent to the Commissioner, the Manager will advise you to send the Manager the response. To send information to the Commissioner's home email address take these steps:

i. Follow the procedures above.

ii. In order to keep it private, place the Commissioner's personal email address in the "Bcc" field.

iii. Place the BoCC email address in the "To" field so that all Commissioner's will receive the information and the email will be posted online for the public to view. The public expects to see these emails and it is essential that we fulfill this expectation.

d. If there is any doubt about the appropriateness of a Commission communication, contact your supervisor, Department Director and/or the County Manager for clarification.

e. Meeting scheduling, travel arrangements or personal communications between Commission Services personnel and Commissioners are not subject to this protocol.

f. Within the above procedures, employees are particularly encouraged to share good news about county employees and activities, and customer service successes with the Commission.

3. Policy making is the major responsibility of the BoCC. Help them by providing well prepared and thorough blue sheets and back up documentation. It is important that Blue Sheet/Agenda Items be prepared thoroughly and properly. Fill in all key sections and submit it on time. All Commission Blue Sheet/Agenda Items asking for decisions from the County Manager or Commission should have issues highlighted. Alternative actions or solutions and supporting

documents should be provided. For training on Blue Sheet/Agenda Item preparation, contact the Agenda Office at 352-264-6906. Instructions for Blue Sheet Preparation

## OTHER PROTOCOLS

1. Alachua County has a decentralized media contact philosophy. Employees are not required to go through the County Manager's Office or the Communications Office for approval to speak to the media. However, once the contact has taken place, employees are required to send a Media Contact Notification email to the County Manager, Communications Coordinator, and their department director, with a brief summary of the contact.

2. The "Alachua County" (all employee email list) group in the email system is for sending emails concerning County business only and is not to be used to solicit help or funds for various charitable organizations or employee sick leave requests without the express authorization of the County Manager or her designee. If approved, the email will be sent by the County Manager's Office.

"The County e-mail system may not be used to solicit funds or to solicit participation in outside organizations or promote functions not related to County government unless it is first authorized by the County Manager or his designee.

Two rules when using the "Alachua County" email group for County business:

1. When using the "Alachua County" group, always place the group in the Bcc field. This will insure that no "Reply All" emails will go to every County employee.

2. Never send attachments to the "Alachua County" group. This bogs down the network. If you want to share a document, turn it into a web-link. For assistance in creating links contact the ITS Help Desk"

3. Break the Paper Habit - Whenever possible electronically transmit documents and use email to communicate. If paper copies are required, use two sided paper copies. Use black and white copies when appropriate, however it is understood that some documents require the use of color. Bulky reports or large graphic items may be displayed in the Commission office to avoid costly duplication. Contact the County Manager for use of this display area.

4. Virtually all correspondence is public record so prepare documents appropriately. Remember that email is a business tool, and keep correspondence professional (knowing that anyone may read it in the future). Avoid personal or private references as they may not translate well months later. If an email exchange becomes argumentative, stop the email thread and pick up the phone or visit your colleague to talk it through. It is important to keep email professional and respectful.

5. Please include a date on all correspondence and appropriate initials of signer (upper case), composer, if different, (uppercase) and word processor (lowercase) at bottom of business correspondence. For example: ABC/DE/fg. If a document is a draft, indicate it is a draft on the

document and develop a notation to indicate evolving versions of a draft document. Pages should be numbered.

6. All non-correspondence documents, print and/or digital, such as bookmarks, pamphlets and annual reports; and all videos for public distribution, must be reviewed and approved by the Communications Office to ensure that proper communications standards are followed. A Print Approval Form must be submitted with the document.

Note: Please include the following language on these materials:

To request this document in alternate formats contact (Appropriate department or division and appropriate phone number)

TTY users please call 711 (Florida Relay Service)

#### (NEW PROTOCOL) OTHER LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS COMMUNICATIONS

The County Manager, the County Attorney, the Communications and Legislative Affairs Director, and any other pertinent staff must be copied on these communications. The County Manager must approve the information prior to sending.

#### REGULATORY AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES COMMUNICATIONS

Unless prohibited by law, formal communications by County department personnel to regulatory agencies (such as FDEP or FDOT) and other governments and municipalities (such as the City of Gainesville) on items of business, must be copied to the Department Director, the County Manager and the County Attorney. An attachment of the related document initiating the response must be attached (such as the original notification letter or email) and/or a summary of the reason for the action should be sent to the responsible County official. If there is any doubt, contact the County Manager.

#### THREATS OF LITIGATION OR LAWSUITS / DANGEROUS CONDITIONS

Communications related to threatened or proposed litigation must be sent to the County Manager and County Attorney as soon as possible. In addition, notice of dangerous situations or conditions threatening or impacting citizens must include Risk Management and the appropriate emergency service provider.

#### LOCAL MUNICIPAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS OR REGULATORY CHANGES IMPACTING ALACHUA COUNTY

Information on proposed or recently issued legislation, regardless of positive or negative impact to Alachua County, must be copied to the County Manager, the County Attorney and the Communications and Legislative Affairs Director. It is important to include a bill number and a factual review of the impact, if known.