



HOW TO SAFELY SHARE INFORMATION BY EMAIL

Government business relies on the sharing of information and much of this business is conducted by email. The inappropriate sharing and accidental loss of sensitive information can have serious consequences for all involved. Before sharing any information by email, it is important to think about what type of information is being shared and who it is being shared with.

Email recipients

Before sharing any information by email, senders should:

- Check what type of information is being shared and think about the potential security risks of sharing it. The Government Security Classification Policy contains guidance on how to share various types of sensitive information.
- Consider writing the email before adding any recipient addresses.
- Make sure that spreadsheets and tables do not include hidden data before attaching them. You can use the Document Inspector to do so by clicking File>Info>Check for Issues>Inspect Document
- Think about who the email will be sent to – if it's more than one person, do all recipients need to see this information?
- Use bulk email services, mail merge, or secure data transfer services. If these are unavailable, BCC should be used.
- Consider setting a delay on your email, allowing time for errors to be corrected before the email is sent.

What if I make a mistake?

We understand that accidents can happen. If you realise you have shared information that should not have been shared, don't panic, but do take prompt action:

- Try to recall the email as soon as possible.
- If you can't recall it, contact the person who received it and ask them to delete it.
- Contact your line manager or local security team for advice.

It is important you understand your local reporting procedures because reporting incidents early can prevent harm.

SOME THINGS YOU CAN'T UNDO