

Email code of conduct for governmental bodies

Email code of conduct for governmental bodies: "timely and guaranteed response"

This code of conduct sets out how governmental bodies should carry out activities relating to receiving, responding to and filing emails. This code of conduct also discusses the application of guidelines and the monitoring of performance levels. The code of conduct was drawn up in late 2005 by the forum that was then known as "burger@overheid". Existing government guidelines, such as those of the Government Information Council (VoRa), were taken into account in this process.

A. Contact

Each governmental body can be contacted by email. Where this is not the case, the reason for this decision should be published on the website.

B. Acknowledgement of receipt

An acknowledgement of receipt should be sent in reply to emails received as soon as possible, unless the email is responded to immediately. The acknowledgement of receipt should indicate within how many days the person who sent the email should expect an initial response.

Assigning a reference number to citizens for whom the governmental body does not have a file, which reference number the applicant can then refer to in later emails, is to be recommended.

C. Processing

When processing emails, a distinction is made between simple and complex questions. Simple questions relate to common facts or procedures, such as opening hours, parking regulations, permit procedures, etc. Such questions should always be processed within two days. Complex questions or requests may take more time. In any case, the sender should be informed of the expected processing period within 10 working days. If a governmental body foresees that the indicated processing period will not be sufficient, it will inform the sender of this and indicate a new processing period.

D. Filing

Emails shall be filed safely and securely, according to the same rules that apply to letters.

E. Guidelines

Each governmental body shall apply clear guidelines for the processing of emails, which citizens can consult on the website of the relevant body. Citizens will also be informed of the procedure for complaints relating to how their email has been processed.

F. Publishing performance levels

Each governmental body will measure its performance levels in relation to processing emails on a regular basis and will publish the results, for example on its website or in its annual report.