

**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

**Subject:**  
**USE OF VOICE MAIL BY COUNTY DEPARTMENTS**

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**Purpose:**

To establish guidelines for effective use of voice mail within the County

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all county departments and service areas. It outlines policies and procedures to ensure that voice mail is used in such a way as to take full advantage of the benefits of this technology while avoiding potential detriments that can result from its misuse.

**Policy:**

1. The telephone number listed for each department head should be answered during normal business hours by a person, if practical, without intervention of voice mail recording. During absences of the department head's secretary, it is recommended that the phone be programmed to be answered by another individual within that same department. (This recommendation does not apply when circumstances preclude its practicability; e.g., at department head's secondary offices, small departments, staff shortages, etc.) As appropriate, department heads will designate other key positions and critical functions within their organizations where this rule should apply.
2. Listed telephones for maintenance/trouble reporting and dispatch desks will not be diverted to voice mail during normal business hours.
3. As a general rule, county employees should respond to telephone calls when they are at their place of work, unless they are having a meeting or cannot be disturbed for some other reason.
4. Department heads will establish procedures to ensure regular screening and reply to voice mail messages. Response on the same day is preferred, but should not exceed twenty-four (24) hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays. These procedures should also ensure that voice mail users, who plan to be away from their offices for longer than one business day, divert their voice mailbox to another staff member.
5. Department heads will ensure that all voice mail greetings offer callers the option of being transferred to an attendant during normal business hours.

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6. Personal greetings are encouraged; however, they must be business like and as brief as possible. The greeting should briefly announce why the call is being diverted to voice mail and request the caller to leave a message explaining the nature of the call or the action/response desired.
7. Information Services will purge the voice mail system of messages that have not been reviewed within ten (10) days of receipt.

**Reference:**

Minute Order 3.26 of 02/19/91  
Minute Order 3.7 of 11/07/06  
Minute Order 3.3 of 12/06/11  
Minute Order 3.8 of 10/23/2018 (RESCINDED)

RESCINDED