



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

April 13, 2022

Tonia Austin-Douglas  
Department of Homeland Security  
United States Coast Guard  
Attn: Records Manager  
US Coast Guard Stop 7710  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20593-7710

Dear Tonia Austin-Douglas,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has received an email from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of the Inspector General (OIG), informing us that email from a former SES employee was deleted from the USCG email system after 90 days. The email further explains that, "The USCG will save all electronic communication, to include chats and emails, for all employees for 365 days automatically. When an employee separates, after 30 days that person's USCG account is suspended. After 60 days of inactivity, the account is decommissioned and placed in a pending deletion status. After 90 days of inactivity, the account and data may be deleted from USCG servers."

While the above referenced SES employee's email account should have been considered a permanent "Capstone" email account in accordance with the USCG email records retention schedule, GRS 6.1-0026-2019-0001, NARA is further concerned about the fact that the above quoted email referenced all USCG email accounts. Email accounts that are designated as "Capstone" accounts are required to be kept for a minimum of 15 years before transferring to the National Archives, while non-Capstone email accounts are currently unscheduled and therefore should be treated as permanent.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.14(a), I am requesting that the USCG provide NARA with an unauthorized disposition report regarding this allegation. This report should include a complete description of the records with volume and dates if known; a description of the office maintaining the records; a statement of the exact circumstances surrounding the removal,

defacing, alteration, or destruction of records; a statement of the safeguards established to prevent further loss of documentation; and details of the actions taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records.

I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

cc. Michelle Thomas, Department Records Officer, Department of Homeland Security



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

August 12, 2022

Tonia Austin-Douglas  
Department of Homeland Security  
United States Coast Guard  
Attn: Records Manager  
US Coast Guard Stop 7710  
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20593-7710

Dear Tonia Austin-Douglas,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has received your report in response to our letter regarding information we received from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of the Inspector General (OIG), informing us that email from a former SES employee was deleted from the USCG email system after 90 days. The email further explains that, "The USCG will save all electronic communication, to include chats and emails, for all employees for 365 days automatically. When an employee separates, after 30 days that person's USCG account is suspended. After 60 days of inactivity, the account is decommissioned and placed in a pending deletion status. After 90 days of inactivity, the account and data may be deleted from USCG servers."

The report you provided us documented that the information the OIG received was inaccurate and that the Coast Guard has been using a 15 year retention for permanent Capstone email accounts and a 10 year temporary retention for all other accounts since the approval of the Capstone email records retention schedule in 2019.

We understand that the referenced account was in fact not a "Capstone" account and while Microsoft Corporation was engaged in efforts to retrieve the emails from the referenced accounts, attempts were ultimately unsuccessful. It is not possible to determine volume and dates of loss but all email for the referenced account have been lost. The loss occurred prior to the account being migrated to the new email infrastructure. Your report also outlined that the

information that a test was conducted on all the email accounts of Capstone Officials who departed the USCG in 2021 and all were successfully located.

USCG has documented that all email accounts have been migrated to the new infrastructure and technical controls have been established to manage the retention compliance of the users' emails and this has been confirmed to be working as expected.

Based on the information you have provided, NARA considers this matter resolved. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at [laurence.brewer@nara.gov](mailto:laurence.brewer@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher E. Kline".

for

LAURENCE BREWER

Chief Records Officer

for the U.S. Government

cc. Michelle Thomas, Department Records Officer, Department of Homeland Security