



USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer

Information Technology Services - ITS Minnesota

How to Handle SPAM and Undesirable E-mail

FACTS:

- SPAM is defined as: E-mail that is a) mass mailed b) commercial in nature c)not requested by the recipient and d) sent without a prior business relationship.
- SPOOFING is defined as: falsifying information like a return e-mail address being used that belongs to someone else. In other words, a cyberthug's act of tampering with e-mail by using contact data, such as that in another person's private address book, without authority, approval, or any right to do so.
- PHISHING is defined as: a type of SPAM sent by identity thieves to try to trick you into disclosing your financial information or other sensitive data.
- We are always going to receive SPAM and Undesirable E-mail.
- The USDA Gateway blocks 300,000 (+) e-mails a day.
- Additional e-mail blocks are implemented on our gateway on a regular basis.
- Federal e-mail addresses are easily attainable by spammers.
- Spammers are clever in their tactics of spamming and are always changing them.

REPORTING: *(Report occurrences to your lead IT Specialist)*

- Always report Pornographic e-mail.
- Always report Phishing/fraudulent e-mail that tries to obtain bank account information or other sensitive data.

WHAT CAN I DO AS A USER?:

- Delete SPAM directly from your e-mail inbox without opening it. Always choose "Yes" to permanently delete items from your "Deleted Items" folder when prompted on exit from Outlook.
- Never reply to SPAM. This is a common tactic to confirm your e-mail address.
- Try not to use the Outlook Preview Pane before deleting SPAM. It could automatically send a confirmation of your e-mail address back to the SPAM source. To turn the Preview Pane on or off go to the View pull-down menu and click on "Preview Pane".
- Create an Outlook Client Rule to filter your e-mail for SPAM. See link for instructions. http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/ITS/Help/Outlook_Client_Side_SPAM_rule.pdf or http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/ITS/Help/workstationfilters_outlook.pdf
- When setting up a Rule always create a folder that the redirected e-mail is contained in. This gives you the opportunity to recover a legitimate e-mail that was inadvertently redirected.
- Avoid visiting web sites that are not work-related. Simply visiting a web site can trigger a number of undesirable web activities. Some examples are SPAM advertising, adware and spyware. Avoid web site interactions like surveys, signing guest books, or any kind of e-mail confirmations.
- Review more information on Phishing:
<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/phishingalrt.htm>