

*Superior Court of the State of Washington  
for the County of King*

**E-mail Policies**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of e-mail in communicating with court staff. This policy does not apply to the other forms of communication, and does not establish a preference for e-mail communication over any other form of communication.
2. **Address:** Each courtroom will be assigned an e-mail address to be used by counsel (or their staff) in communicating with court staff, when e-mail communication is appropriate. The address will be [judge's last name].court@kingcounty.gov. Commissioners' departments will not have individual addresses, but the family law, ex parte and mental health departments will each have an address for the department (e.g., familylaw.court@kingcounty.gov). Courts not wishing to receive e-mail communication will have an automatic response indicating that the courtroom does not accept e-mail and providing the court's phone number.
3. **Use of judge's individual address prohibited:** The only address to be used by attorneys, pro se litigants or others who need to communicate with court staff about a case is the courtroom e-mail address. Absent express invitation by the judge, the judge's individual e-mail address is not to be used.
4. **Guidelines for use of e-mail:** E-mail communication with the courtroom is appropriate in the following situations:
  - a. To obtain a date for an in-court hearing;
  - b. To determine the judge's availability for a settlement conference;
  - c. To determine the availability of equipment needed for trial (such as a video player or speaker phone);
  - d. To determine the judge's preference as to number of copies of jury instructions required for trial;
  - e. To advise the court of a settlement (to be immediately followed by formal written notice pursuant to CR 41(e));
  - f. To determine whether the judge will accept pleadings, jury instructions, legal memoranda, and the like, in the form of an e-mail submission;
  - g. Other matters of a similar nature that would be appropriate to handle by way of a phone call to court staff.
5. **Ex parte communication prohibited:** The prohibitions regarding ex parte contact with the court are fully applicable to e-mail communication. If an attorney is communicating substantive information to court staff, the e-mail must also be sent to opposing counsel and so indicate on its face. Substantive information includes information regarding the likelihood of settlement, the timing of witnesses, anticipated problems with scheduling, concerns regarding security and other case-specific issues.

6. **Service of working copies and pleadings:** Absent prior permission of the court, e-mail may not be used to provide working copies of legal pleadings, including jury instructions. Absent agreement or opposing counsel or express permission of the court, e-mail may not be used for service of pleadings on opposing parties, even in those situations where the court has agreed to accept working copies by e-mail.