

March 10, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chapter Presidents

RE: Tips on Obtaining Free E-mail Services

SUMMARY: Given the many benefits of having a free e-mail service, either as a primary or supplementary e-mail address, here are a few tips on obtaining and using these services.

The first question to ask is why anyone would want a free e-mail service. Even if you already have an e-mail account with your Internet Service Provider (ISP), there are several reasons why you might want to use a free service to establish another e-mail address.

- **Accessibility.** Access from anywhere even if you can't use your ISP. Free e-mail services can be accessed from anywhere there is an internet connection (libraries, internet cafés, or home).
- **Portability.** Most folks will switch ISPs at least once. Free e-mail services not connected to your ISP can ease the transition for you, your friends, and family.
- **Privacy.** Free e-mail services can cut down on spam to your work or home e-mail. Many people use free e-mail services when assigning an e-mail address to e-commerce purchases. Many vendors sell lists of e-mail addresses to other vendors who then begin sending you unwanted and sometimes inappropriate e-mail.
- **Back-up.** Even the largest ISPs sometimes experience outages. In the event of your inability to access your regular e-mail service through your ISP, free e-mails can be used to conduct business as usual.
- **Anonymity.** All government e-mails identify the user by name as a federal employee and as operating from a government PC. There may be instances (including e-mails of a legislative nature going to elected officials) in which you may not wish to include all of this information. **Note: Not all agencies allow employees to use free e-mail services from the workplace. Check with your local steward or National Field Representative for details on your particular workplace.**
- **Cost.** Lastly, it's free!

Subscribing to one of these services is easy and not at all time-consuming.

- 1) Like searching for any service over the web, you will first have to have access to the web. If you do not already have an ISP, you can access the web from a public library or at an internet café. In addition, most hotels have commercial internet terminals.
- 2) Start with any of the major search engines (MSN, Google, Yahoo, Lycos, etc.) and enter the term “free e-mail.” Examine the results.
- 3) Try going for one of the larger names. These services are more likely to survive longer and less likely to resell e-mail information. Even with larger companies, read any agreements or privacy policies carefully.
- 4) During the online registration process, you will be asked to provide information about yourself. You do not have to enter any information that is not marked “required,” and many services will let you opt out of receiving “special offers and promotions” via e-mail. Be aware that the default setting for this question will almost always be “yes.”
- 5) You will frequently be asked for a safety question. This is used in the event of a lost password. Even if not required, this question provides a very useful function. Use a question that is specific to you but one which you will always be able to remember (i.e., what is your father’s middle name?).
- 6) After the registration process is complete, write down your login and password and store in a safe place.
- 7) When traveling or anytime you are unable to access your regular ISP, simply access your free e-mail provider from the internet and use your login information to send and receive e-mails.

Free e-mail service can be a valuable tool for the chapter. The resulting e-mail address can be used for local e-mail surveys, discussions, or communications between chapter leaders and also when contacting your elected officials on legislative matters. I hope these tips enable you to easily take advantage of this tool.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President