



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER LISTSERV ETIQUETTE

To enhance networking among local government officials, the MSU Local Government Center has created listservs for associations and groups of elected officials to provide a forum where questions can be asked and answers provided by one's peers. Those who are new to their profession agree that the listserv has been a valuable tool to glean wisdom from the experienced within their ranks. The staff at the LGC also monitors the listserv and responds with reference to Montana Code Annotated when appropriate. Here are a few tips to remember when using the listserv:

1. **Comments posted to the listserv are public record.** The listserv is a professional and information based service and posted comments should appropriately reflect the professionalism of your office. The use of the listserv to solicit support for or opposition to any political committee, the nomination or election of any person to public office, or the passage of a ballot issue is prohibited by MCA 2-2-121(3)(a).
2. Responses to many listserv questions and discussion topics are of interest to the entire list. In these cases, it is appropriate to reply to the listserv list address. (listname@sympa.montana.edu) (listname = the name of your association)
3. Personal replies should be directed to specific individuals rather than to the entire list. Remember to cut and past the sender's e-mail address when replying rather than simply hitting the "Reply" button which sends the response to the entire list. **Below are some examples of replies sent to an entire list, which would have been more appropriate to send directly to the individual whose message prompted the reply.**
 - "Thanks"
 - "Yes or No"
 - "I would like more information. Could you e-mail me directly?"
 - "Welcome!" (Response to someone introducing themselves as a new subscriber.)
4. Include a descriptive subject line. E-mails received with no subject line may likely be perceived as spam by an email filter and be deleted before reaching the recipient's inbox.
5. Consider using surveys or polls for questions that elicit a Yes or No response and posting the results on the listserv. Please refer to the tutorial posted on the LGC website www.msulocalgov.org for further instruction.
6. You are only able to reply to the listserv from the e-mail account that has been set up for you. If you would like to change your e-mail address, please e-mail Jen Blessum, jennifer.blessum@montana.edu.
7. Administrative messages such as adding or removing a subscriber should be sent to Jen Blessum jennifer.blessum@montana.edu instead of to the listserv.
8. If you will be away from your office for an extended period of time and don't want your inbox to be filled with listserv e-mails during your absence, please e-mail Jen with the dates you will be gone and she will temporarily remove you from the list and reinstate you upon your return.