

Goodwin Living Guidelines for Automatic Out-of-Office Email Replies

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As a companion piece to our guidelines to standard email signatures, we'd like to provide staff with helpful tips for automatic emails when you're away from the office. Below, please find options for the text to include in your automatic replies, as well as instructions for how to create automatic replies.

We provide options to cover three scenarios:

- 1) When you are away and are not checking emails during your absence
- 2) When you are away and checking them periodically
- 3) When you have multiple points of contact in your absence

Once you've created your standard reply message, it is easy to update for any time you'll be away from the office.

For all options, your auto-reply should contain the following information:

- A basic greeting to start the message
- A clear statement that you are out of the office and unable to reply to emails
- The date you will return to the office
- The name, phone number and email address of someone who can respond to your emails while you're away from the office.
- Reassurance that you will reply to emails once you're able.

Here is the basic structure for a standard auto-reply email message:

Hello. Thank you for your email.

I am currently out of the office and will return on [insert date]. For immediate assistance in my absence, please contact [insert name] at [insert phone number] or [insert email address], and they will be happy to help you.

If you can wait for a response until after my return, I will reply to your email as soon as I'm able upon my return to the office on [insert date].

Regards,
[name]
[title]
[phone number / email address]

Here are more examples you can choose from to create your reply:

Option 1 / If You Plan to Check Email Periodically While Away

Hello. Thank you for your email.

I am currently out of the office and will return on [insert date]. I will check email occasionally while I'm away, though if you require immediate assistance, please contact [insert name] at [insert phone number] or [insert email address], and they will be happy to help you.

If you can wait for a response until after my return, I will reply to your email as soon as I'm able upon my return to the office on [insert date].

Best,
[name]
[title]
[phone number / email address]

Option 2 / If You Are Away Unexpected for an Unknown Period of Time

Hello. Thank you for your email.

I am away from the office for an unexpected reason and am unsure of my return date. Your email is important to me. Please contact [insert name] at [insert phone number] or [insert email address], and they will be happy to help you.

If I am able to check email during my absence, I will strive to be in touch. Otherwise, please know the person listed above will ensure you receive the information or help that you need.

Best,
[name]
[title]
[phone number / email address]

Option 3 / If You Have Multiple Out-of-Office Contacts to Provide

Hello. Thank you for your email.

I am currently out of the office and will return on [insert date]. Here is a list of colleagues who can help you in my absence:

- For assistance with [insert topic or care area or work expertise], please contact [insert name] at [insert phone number] or [insert email address]
- For assistance with [insert topic or care area or work expertise], please contact [insert name] at [insert phone number] or [insert email address]
- For assistance with [insert topic or care area or work expertise], please contact [insert name] at [insert phone number] or [insert email address]

If you can wait for a response until after my return, I will reply to your email as soon as I'm able upon my return to the office on [insert date].

Best,
[name]
[title]
[phone number / email address]

How to set up email auto-replies using the Outlook desktop app?

- Select the "File" tab at the top left-hand corner of your Outlook screen
- Select "Automatic Replies (Out of Office)" just below Account Settings
- Select "Send Automatic Replies"
- Check the "Only send during this time range" and insert dates
- The system will default to the "Inside My Organization" tab. Copy and paste the sample copy you need, update with dates and contact info, include your signature (without the logo as that image will not transfer). Note: check to be sure your message is formatted to be Palatino Linotype, size 12.
- Once you've updated the "Inside My Organization" tab, copy all of the text you've just edited, select the "Outside My Organization" tab and paste that text into the second tab.
- Hit "OK" and your auto replies should be activated.
- You can test your message by sending yourself an email. The auto-reply should appear almost instantly in your own inbox so you can see if it's working.

If you have any technical troubles setting up your auto-reply, please submit an "IT Help Desk" request. If you have questions about the templates provided in this document, please reach out to MarComms@GoodwinLiving.org