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Office of Origin:	M/CIO
Notice Category:	Policy-Reminder
Date of Announcement:	March 21, 2023
Distribution:	USAID/General Notice

TikTok Is Not Permitted on USAID Devices

The Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer (M/CIO) would like to remind USAID workforce members that the use or downloading of the social media application TikTok is prohibited on government-furnished equipment (GFE), including government-issued phones and tablets.

In December 2022, Congress voted to ban Federal employees from using the TikTok app on GFEs (P.L. 117-328, [The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#)), and subsequent implementation guidance was issued on February 27, 2023, by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB): [M-23-13: "No TikTok on Government Devices" Implementation Guidance](#). USAID's long-standing policy prohibiting the use of TikTok can be found in [ADS Chapter 545, Information Systems Security, 545.3.20.1, "Social media and networking applications must not be used without written approval from M/CIO,"](#) as well as in [Agency Notice 01174 - TikTok Not Approved for Use on USAID Devices](#).

M/CIO has ensured that no USAID-issued equipment contains the TikTok application, and staff should not attempt to download it. The Agency is monitoring GFE devices for instances of TikTok, and appropriate repercussions will be taken should staff attempt to access it.

The USAID workforce is also reminded to be cautious when downloading any apps on

personal devices by reviewing the apps' permissions regularly, removing apps no longer being used, and running a search for the country of origin prior to downloading the app. The USAID workforce is also reminded that they should conduct USAID business on government-furnished equipment except in the limited exceptional circumstances outlined in [ADS Chapter 545](#) and [ADS Chapter 502, The USAID Records Management Program](#).

Any questions concerning this notice may be directed to:

-- Dr. Laura Samotshozo, M/CIO/IA, lsamotshozo@usaid.gov

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Office of Origin: M/MS/IRD and M/CIO
Notice Category: Policy
Date of Announcement: July 18, 2023
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Updated Policy on the Use of Third-Party Messaging Applications, Including WhatsApp

To reduce Agency burdens and enhance interoperability, and in alignment with Department of State policy, the Bureau for Management's Office of Management Services, Information Records Division (M/MS/IRD) and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (M/CIO) have collaborated to update [ADS Chapter 502, The USAID Records Management Program \(http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502\)](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502), regarding the use of non-official personal third-party electronic messaging (EM) applications to conduct USAID business. The updated policy allows individuals to use their personal accounts on third party EM applications, such as WhatsApp, Signal, or Telegram, under circumstances specified in the ADS if necessary to conduct Agency business. An example of these specified circumstances is if use of the personal account on the approved third party application or platform is the only means of communication our partner is willing to use or the primary means that a group of partners is using.

Approved USAID EM systems are divided into two (2) categories:

1. Official EM Systems/Applications - Owned by USAID and approved by USAID to conduct Agency business

- Usaid.gov email account
- Text messages from government furnished devices
- USAID websites
- USAID Google Workspace account

2. Approved Non-official EM Systems/ Applications - Personal accounts owned by the employee, member of the workforce, or others, not USAID

- Non-official (personal) email accounts and servers
- Text messages from personal devices
- Non-USAID social media sites
- Other commercial vendor personal accounts, systems, tools, or applications, such as WhatsApp or Signal

Reminder: Regardless of which non-government application or platform is used, all members of the USAID workforce who have physical and/or logical access to USAID facilities and information systems — including staff from all hiring or contracting mechanisms — have a legal responsibility to ensure that all federal records created, sent or received are captured and stored on official Agency systems within 20 days in accordance with the [44 U.S.C §2911\(a\) of the Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014 \(http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:44%20section:2911%20edition:prelim\)%20OR%20\(granuleid:USC-prelim-title44-section2911\)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true\)](http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:44%20section:2911%20edition:prelim)%20OR%20(granuleid:USC-prelim-title44-section2911)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true), (see [ADS Chapter 502 section 502.3.4.7 \(http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502\)](http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502)). If use of a non-official EM system/application is necessary to conduct agency business under approved circumstances the member of the workforce must forward the full message chain (metadata, the descriptive data about the messages like date and time, included) to their official USAID EM account. It's recommended that members of the workforce carbon copy the communication to their official government email at the same time, when possible.

Members of the USAID workforce, regardless of labor category, must use Agency EM systems to conduct official business to the fullest extent possible. The capture of records on agency systems is essential to ensuring important policies, decisions, and operations of the Agency are adequately recorded, as well as cybersecurity best practices are followed, for storage of agency records. The use of non-official accounts, applications, or platforms, including personal email accounts or approved non-Government messaging applications should never be the primary means of conducting Agency business (see <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502>) for guidance on the use of non-government accounts).

(b)(3):6 U.S.C. § 133 (Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002)

Any questions concerning this notice may be directed to:

-- Christopher Colbow, M/MS/IRD, (571) 228-5866, ccolbow@usaid.gov (<mailto:ccolbow@usaid.gov>), or

-- Zecharia Kahn, M/CIO/ITO, (202) 916-4668, zkahn@usaid.gov (<mailto:zkahn@usaid.gov>)

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Release Status: Released
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Appropriate Use of Text Messages and Third-Party Applications

In light of [recent news reports \(https://www.npr.org/2022/07/19/1112288183/secret-service-deleted-texts-national-archives-letter\)](https://www.npr.org/2022/07/19/1112288183/secret-service-deleted-texts-national-archives-letter), we would like to remind all members of the workforce that text messages sent/received are typically captured/stored via a third-party service provider, and are not stored on the Agency's network. Therefore, USAID does not encourage the use of text messaging to conduct official Agency business. However, if an official record is created, sent, or received via text to conduct Agency business, it is the responsibility of the USAID employee to ensure that any Federal records of the Agency are appropriately captured within an official USAID recordkeeping system (see [ADS 502.3.4.7, The USAID Records Management Program \(https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502\)](https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502)). To accomplish this, the employee must forward the communication to an official email account of the employee no later than 20 days after the original creation or transmission of the record.

Reminder: All messages sent or received on a U.S. Government-furnished mobile device is the property of the Agency and not the employee. All messages that represent official Agency business sent or received on any device using any electronic messaging (EM) platform constitute U.S. Government records. All employees, regardless of labor category, must forward any text messages relating to Agency business to their official USAID account for retention.

Furthermore, the use of non-official EM systems (e.g., personal email accounts, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, Snapchat) in the conduct of official Agency business is prohibited. Such use not only compromises the Agency's ability to preserve and protect Agency records, but could potentially lead to the mismanagement of Agency records and/or the unauthorized disclosure of non-public information. Further, the Agency's ability to respond to Freedom of Information Act and other information requests could be compromised.

In limited exceptional circumstances, the use of non-official EM systems may be necessary. If such use must occur, the individual creating, sending, or receiving the record from a non-official electronic messaging system must copy/forward all record content to an official USAID EM account within 20 days in accordance with the Federal Records Act (see [ADS 502.3.4.7 \(https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/502.pdf\)](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/502.pdf)). If use of this exception is necessary, as a best practice, carbon copy your official USAID EM account at the same time, when possible.

As with all official records ([18 USC 2071 \(https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap101-sec2071\)](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title18/USCODE-2011-title18-partI-chap101-sec2071)), including EM, there are potentially criminal and administrative penalties for the unlawful removal, defacing, alteration, alienation, or destruction of federal records.

Note: Intentional violations of any rules, regulations, or other implementing guidelines, as determined by the appropriate supervisor, will be a basis for disciplinary action in accordance with subchapter I, II, or V of chapter 75 of title 5, and may include:

- Suspension for 14 days or less, and/or
- Removal or suspension for more than 14 days, reduction in grade or pay, or furlough.

Important Reminders:

- Do not conduct official business on personal email accounts and other unauthorized EM systems. In limited exceptional circumstances, when the use of non-official EM systems may be necessary, adhere to related policy to ensure official records are captured by the agency for recordkeeping purposes (see [ADS 502.3.4.7 \(https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/502.pdf\)](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/502.pdf));
- Do not use unauthorized applications (e.g., WhatsApp, Viber) to conduct U.S. Government business;
- Do not auto-forward emails between work and personal email accounts;
- Do not send Personally Identifiable Information (PII) unless absolutely necessary. If necessary, encrypt the PII before you send it on business accounts. Use of PII on personal accounts should be avoided. A reminder about safeguarding PII can be found [here](#)

(b)(3):6 U.S.C. § 133 (Critical _____ **and**

- As always, the creation, transmission, or distribution of classified information across an unofficial system is strictly prohibited at all times. Any violation of this policy could result in adverse administrative actions and/or criminal penalties against the member of the workforce, as stated

within the SF-312 Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement (<https://www.gsa.gov/Forms/TrackForm/32978>).

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The following chart illustrates official and non-official electronic messaging systems.

Category		Authorized	Notes
Examples of Official EM Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Email • Google Hangouts (Google Chats) • Text messages from government furnished device 	Yes	Staff must use information systems for USAID business or limited personal use as specified in the Agency acceptable use policy in ADS 545 (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/545.pdf) and email acceptable usage policy here (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/545mam.pdf).
Examples of Non-official EM Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp • Facebook Messenger • Signal • Personal email accounts • Text messages from personal devices 	No	The use of non-official EM systems is not permitted. However, in limited exceptional circumstances, the temporary use of non-official EM systems may be necessary. You must forward all messages created in the conduct of business within 20 days (see ADS 502.3.4.7 (https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/502.pdf))

If you are not sure which applications or systems are approved for use, contact CIO-Helpdesk@usaid.gov (<mailto:CIO-Helpdesk@usaid.gov>) for guidance.

Additional information and resources can be found in ADS 502 (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/502>), ADS 508 (Privacy Program) (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/508>), and ADS 545 (Information Systems Security) (<https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/500/545>).

Any questions concerning this notice may be directed to:

-- Christopher Colbow, M/MS/IRD, (571) 228-5866, ccolbow@usaid.gov (<mailto:ccolbow@usaid.gov>)

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