Guidelines for the Receipt of Email Submissions

City of Regina

The City of Regina (City) receives submissions by e-mail for their competitions. This guide has been developed and is designed to reduce risks associated with this process and provide practical guidance on each step of the process.

1.0   Scope

1.1   Email is the method used by the City to receive bids/proposals/responses (collectively known as submissions) from bidders (i.e., bidders, proponents, or respondents) for all types of solicitation methods and contracts. Email submissions for large file submissions may include a link to a secure file sharing location rather than submitting multiple emails.

1.2   When emailing responses, consider the following risks:

i.   Although emails are usually received quickly, delays can and do happen. This can occur as an email moves from server to server between the sender and the recipient. Such delays are unpredictable, and may result in a late submission, which **must** be rejected by the City.

ii.   The City has protocols in place that may causes an email to be investigated as containing a virus, malware, spam, or other potential threat. Protocols may result in an email being sent to the recipient's inbox late, or in a false positive reading where the email is rejected (see section 4 *Administration of Emailed Submissions AFTER Closing* below for more information).

iii.   The City has technical and security limitations on the accepted size and type of files received in the recipient's inbox. Emails containing restricted file types will not be delivered. Bidders should not include executable files with their bid submissions. Acceptable file types include Word, Excel, PDF and standard picture formats. If larger files are expected as part of the submissions (e.g. drawings, photographs, samples, etc.), a link to a secure file sharing location should be considered and the link added to the bidder's submission email. See 2.7 below for email capacity per email.

iv.   Although the City has security measures in place for its email system, there is always a danger of inappropriate access (e.g., hacking). Consider what personal and/or confidential information may be contained in submissions, and the harm that could result if this information was inappropriately accessed.

v.   Bidders should have procedures in place when the email gateway is not working. Care should be taken to avoid or to be aware of all such causes for an emailed submission to be late or undeliverable.

Bidders should carefully consider these risks and their possible consequences when determining when, and how, to email their submissions.

2.0   General Administration of Emailed Submissions

The following steps should be taken to minimize risks associated with e-mailed submissions:

2.1   Where email is the standard submission method, the City may allow for at least one other means to submit submissions (e.g., courier / in-person delivery) if a bidder is unable to submit via email.   Bidders are responsible to contact Procurement to confirm the appropriate method for delivery.   Submissions must still be received prior to the submission deadline.

2.2   Emailed submissions shall only be received at the dedicated inbox (procurement@regina.ca).

2.3   Prior to closing, the City will maintain confidentiality of e-mail submissions subject to the City officials opening an e-mail for the purpose of identification.

2.4   No member of the evaluation team should have access to the dedicated inbox as it compromises the integrity of the process.

2.5   The City shall respond to anyone submitting an email. This message shall provide confirmation that the email has been received by the City.

2.6   Submissions submitted to an incorrect email address will be rejected.

2.7   Current capacity of the City email system is 35 MB per email.

2.8   If multiple emails are received from the same bidder for the same competition, the City will follow the instructions as provided by the bidder. If the instructions are unclear, the City may request the bidder to clarify which of the emailed documents should be considered as their final and full submission.

2.9   The City regularly clears the dedicated inbox to ensure sufficient space for future use.

3.0 Responding to Bidders Inquiries Received BEFORE Closing

3.1 If a bidder contacts the City asking about their emailed submission, the City official assigned should check the inbox and inform the bidder whether or not their email has been received and includes one or more attachments. The attachments will not be opened, except as identified in 2.3 above.

3.2 If a bidder requests confirmation of receipt of their submission and an emailed submission has not been received from the bidder, the City should follow items ii. though vii. in point 3.3 below.

3.3 If a bidder contacts the City stating that their emailed submission has been rejected (see section 5 Administration of Rejected Submissions below) or that they have not received an email from the City confirming receipt of their emailed submission, the City should do the following (subject to time permitting prior to closing):

  i. Confirm whether or not the email has been received and if there are attachments;

  ii. If an email has not been received, ask the bidder to confirm the email address to which the email was sent, and confirm that it matches the dedicated inbox (if the email was sent to the wrong address and the competition has not yet closed, direct the bidder to the section of the competition document that identifies the correct email address);

  iii. Prior to submission deadline, confirm the total size of attached files is more not than 35 MB. If larger, suggest the submission be re-sent providing a link to a secure file sharing location to reduce the email size;

  iv. Confirm the types of attached files sent, and if they include zip, and/or executable files, suggest that the files be unzipped and or the executable files removed, and the submission be resent. If after revising the file types, the email is larger than 35MB, suggest the submission be re-sent providing a link to a secure file sharing location to reduce the email size (note: emails must be received before closing in order for the submission to be accepted);

  v. Confirm that the dedicated email inbox is not full;

  vi. Confirm that the City's email server is fully functional, and, if a problem is discovered, consider an extension of the closing date of the solicitation to allow time for the issue to be resolved; and

  vii. Inform the bidders that they have alternative means of sending in their submission as identified by Procurement prior to the submission deadline.

4.0 City Administration of Emailed Submissions Received AFTER Closing

4.1 If the **received time** of the email (as demonstrated in the picture below) in the designated inbox is before the closing date and time of the solicitation, accept the submission as being on time. For example, if the closing time is 2:00:00 pm C.S.T. (SK), only accept submissions time stamped 2:00:00 pm C.S.T. (SK) or earlier. For clarity, submission received up to 2:00:00 C.S.T. (SK) are accepted.
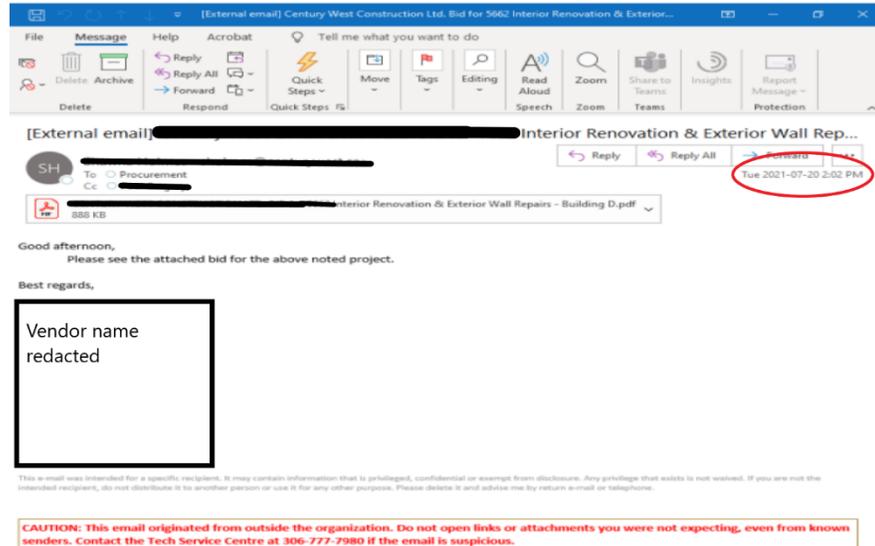

4.2 Check that the **received time** is displaying, in the dedicated inbox.

4.3 If the **received time** of an emailed submission is *after* the closing time and date, the City should follow these steps:

  i. If the email was received **one (1) second** after the closing time, or if the bidder insists that they sent it prior to closing, inform the bidder that the receipt time will be verified.

  This is important because Outlook does not display the seconds in the received time and may need to be verified to ensure the submission was on time. As an example, a submission received at 2:00:34 PM will display as 2:01 PM. To verify, open the email that the bidder sent and:

  - Select "File" from the top left-hand corner;

  - Select "Properties" from the list of icons;

- As demonstrated in the picture below, scroll through the text in the box called "Internet headers", looking for dates and times (there may be more than one time indicated); and
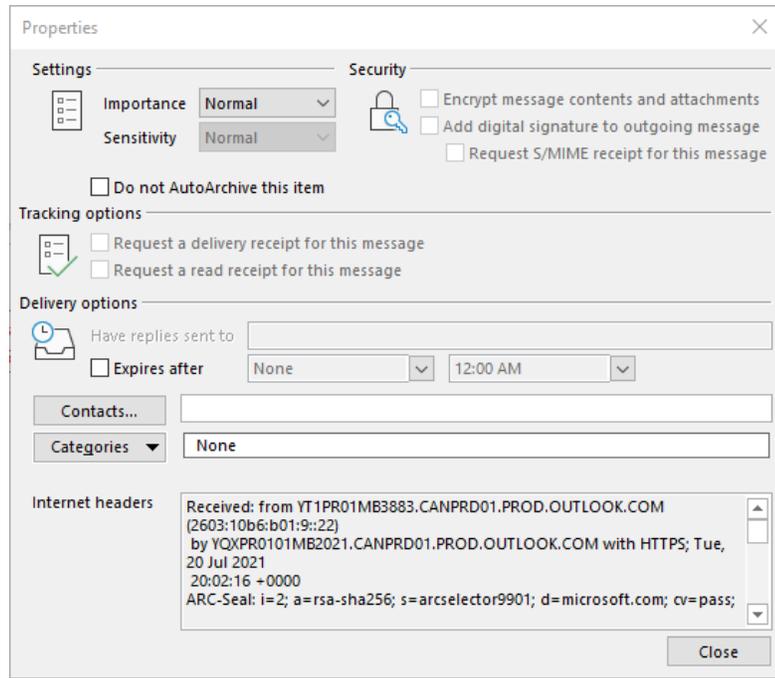
- Consider the latest time in that header as the official received time into the email inbox.

- In the rare case where the bidder may have sent the email before the closing time but the City received the email after the closing time, inform the bidder that we can only consider email submissions that are received in our email inbox at the time of closing.

ii. If the email was received after the closing time of 2:00:00, email the bidder to inform them that their submission was late and has been rejected.

iii. If the instructions in item (ii) above cannot be followed, or if more information is needed (e.g. the reason that an email may have been rejected), follow up with Innovation, Energy and Technology Department requesting confirmation of the time that the email arrived in the email inbox. Request a transcript of the *smtp* log that verifies the time that the email arrived at the email inbox. Details of the email will be required, including the sender's email address, the recipient's email address, and the subject line of the email (if known). The smtp log will be processed as soon as possible. Once received, use the time state in the smtp log to determine whether or not the submission was received on time. Retain a copy of the *smtp* log transcript in the procurement file as evidence proving when the email was received. (Note: smtp log states time of receipt as Greenwich Mean Time so 6 hours must be subtracted from the time stated. 14:00:00 CST = 20:00:00 GMT)

iv.   Accept the submission as arriving on time if: a) the email was received by the email inbox prior to closing and b) any attachments can be opened and saved. Contact the bidder to inform them of this decision.

v.   Do not accept the submission if these steps confirm that either the email was received after closing or that the smtp log has no record of the email being received. Inform the bidder that the email was not received on time and cannot be accepted after closing.

vi.   Confirm that the email server was functional.

4.4   If the reason for rejection is due to the email server being unavailable during the closing time of the solicitation, and this was not discovered prior to closing, discuss this with the Manager, Procurement and Supply Chain.

5.0   Administration of Rejected Submissions

5.1   If a bidder contacts the City regarding an emailed submission and it is found the email was rejected by the email gateway, the City should inform the bidder that the City is unable to consider their submission because it failed to meet the standards that City has in place to address system security.

5.2   Possible reasons for the rejection include:
i.   the email exceeded the maximum size (35 MB);
ii.   the email contained an attachment in a format not accepted by City, such as an executable file type;
iii. the subject line matched a known phishing subject line;
iv.   the sender's email contained a known phishing URL or the email originated from a server associated with phishing;
v.   the sender's outbound mail server was unable to send or is present on a suspended vendor list; or,
vi.   the email contained a virus or malware.

5.3   The City should advise the bidder that if an emailed submission is rejected by the City's email system for any reason, the City will not allow the bidder to resend their submission after closing, even if the rejection was due to an error in the City's system (e.g. a false positive for a virus).

5.4   If the competition has not yet closed, the City should inform the bidder that they can resend their submission and that it will be considered if it arrives prior to closing (see section 3 *Responding to Bidder Inquiries BEFORE Closing* above).