



The Northeast Region of the
Construction Specifications Institute

Electronic Communications Protocol

Electronic communication offers an efficient and reliable exchange for information, but speed and negligence can result in communication overload and miscommunication. The CSI Northeast Region (NER) has compiled the following list of protocols, to ensure professional correspondence among our members, and efficient use of our volunteers' time.

Know Your Audience

- CSI Leaders should use the Institute's [Online Email Tool](#) whenever possible.
- Only send messages to recipients who *need to know* the information in the message.
 - Minimize carbon copies (CC) unless they are *necessary*.
 - Only use 'Reply To All' if the reply *needs* to be seen by each original recipient.
- If emailing to a distribution list, make sure the list is up-to-date.
- Choose the most appropriate method for reaching the target audience
 - (e.g., email, social media, website, newsletters, etc.).

Keep Content Clear and Concise

- Write a concise, descriptive, and meaningful subject line that recipient(s) will understand.
 - Make sure the subject line relates to the message content.
- Write single subject email messages whenever possible, to help recipients file/categorize.
- State the purpose of your message in the opening line.
- Always keep messages brief and to the point.
 - Get to the point as quickly as possible.
 - Cut out unnecessary information.
 - Organize text into bullet points, numbers, or lists whenever possible.
 - Occasionally use bold and italicized font to emphasize important information.
 - Use sub-topic headings to break up information when long messages are required.
 - Avoid long sentences and paragraphs, and keep sentences to 15-20 words.
- Choose short file names
 - Common best practices for online web pages and electronic files, strongly encourage keeping names as short as possible for: web pages, web page titles, hyperlinks, documents posted to the web pages, email file attachments, template files, etc.
- For website content (in addition to tips above), say it once and in the correct place.
 - Avoid duplicate content in various locations.
 - Store files/data in a single location, then reference with hyperlinks from other web pages.
- For PowerPoint presentations, use more images than words.
 - Use high resolution photos and graphics to aid or support minimal text content.
 - Type detailed information in the speaker's notes (not on the slides).

Use Professional Style and Language

- Choose the appropriate font, color, and size.
 - Adhere to CSI branding whenever possible (i.e., Arial font, 10-pt size, black/red/blue)
 - Do not write in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, as this is generally interpreted as shouting.
 - Likewise, avoid writing in 'all lower case letters', as this conveys an unprofessional tone.
- Professionalism extends to all forms of communications, including all electronic forms.
 - Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
 - Avoid offensive language of any kind (e.g., harassment, discrimination, expletives, etc.).
- Carefully choose words that convey a professional image for our organization.
 - Never send an electronic message that you would not feel comfortable seeing in court.
- Avoid publicizing your own company's products and/or services
 - Consider using a separate email signature for CSI correspondence.
 - Avoid including your company's ads or promotional tag lines and images.
 - Avoid publicizing your company's products and/or services in CSI communications.
- Always proofread your message before you send.