



Mailbox Over Quota? Where Does the E-mail Go?

Have you ever wondered what happens to your e-mail if your mailbox fills up? Here's how it works.

Within the first 8 days of your mailbox being continuously over quota:

If your mailbox fills up and exceeds the standard 3 megabyte disk space allocation, the mail server accepts and holds your incoming mail; it notifies you and the sender that mail cannot be delivered because your mailbox is full.

The mail server then checks your disk space about every 4 hours for 5 days to see if you've freed up any space by reading and deleting your mail. If you have, the server delivers as much mail as it can, until it reaches the quota again. This process continues as you receive, read, and delete mail. Even if you get mail on the 7th day of being over quota, the server will still try to deliver your mail for the next 5 days.

However, any mail received on the **8th day or later of your mailbox being continuously over quota** is refused by the server and the process below kicks into place. Please keep in mind, this applies **only** when your mailbox has been **over quota** and **untouched** continuously for 8 days or more.

After 8 days of your mailbox being continuously over quota:

The mail server sets a temporary error condition and starts to bounce incoming messages back to the sender's mail server. Depending on the configuration, the sender's mail server may or may not notify the sender and/or re-try to deliver the bounced messages.

After 90 days of your mailbox being continuously over quota:

The mail server sets a permanent error condition and instantly bounces all incoming messages and re-tries back to the sender's mail server along with the error message "Over quota for 90 days". Although it depends on the configuration, the

sender's mail server will usually notify the sender; it will not try to send the messages again. At this point, your correspondents should realize that your mailbox has been abandoned and stop sending mail.

After 180 days of your mailbox being continuously over quota:

The mail server immediately bounces incoming messages back to the sender with the error message "User unknown". This message notifies automated mailing lists that the mailbox is not being used and all mail delivery ceases. At this point, the University also has the option of terminating your mailbox.

How to fix this situation:

To clean up your mailbox and start the process of receiving your e-mail again, please call the Help Desk at 874-HELP option 1, option 4 to get instructions on deleting items in your mailbox.

Once you have done that, the mail server will reset your quota status. This procedure is performed at 3 am the day following your cleanup, so you may experience some delay in being reactivated. If you are a WebMail user or if you do not have an alias as your return address (this includes all ETAL accounts), you may get the error message "Message Not Sent – Server Reported Error Sending!" if you try sending mail before your quota status is reset. Although this delay may be inconvenient, it saves system resources and prevents the system from slowing down considerably.