



Email jokers get the sack

It may seem a bit of harmless fun to send a joke or amusing picture by email, or forward one you have received, but it could cost you your job. If the recipient (or your manager) doesn't like it you can be in big trouble. It doesn't matter whether or not you intended to cause any upset, whether you think the world has gone "too PC" or whatever, the reality of the situation is you could easily be sacked for "email abuse" and that isn't funny...



Like all major companies, **AXA** monitors emails sent both internally and externally by its employees and they are very strict in classifying what they call "email abuse". Increasingly union reps are being asked to help members who suddenly find themselves in hot water over what they thought was a bit of harmless fun.

"We have seen the lot", explained NCC Chair Annie Brownlee, "staff members selling drugs, arranging to have sex in toilets, sending racist and sexual jokes, commenting on colleagues backsides and breasts, all by company email. You really wouldn't think people could be so stupid!"

REMEMBER:

- **AXA** has the right to, and can, read any email you send on their system, regardless of whether it is work or personal.
- The effectiveness of the company firewall to block emails or images is not a measure of what is regarded as acceptable.
- Jokes or images forwarded from managers or team leaders can still see you being disciplined if you forward them on.
- **AXA** is legally liable for inappropriate emails sent from its system to outside email addresses and regards this as gross misconduct, which can, and has, resulted in the sack for offenders.
- Deleting a private email does not mean **AXA** cannot recover it and use it as evidence.
- It does not matter if you, or the recipient, do not find it offensive, if **AXA** regard it as inappropriate you will be disciplined – and **AXA** are not very lenient.
- **AXA** track the number and size of emails and will discipline employees if they consider personal useage to be excessive.

Email sex offender...

Changes in the law are currently being considered in Scotland that may see senders of emails of a sexual nature registered as sex offenders and prosecuted under sexual offences legislation.

Not only would this impact on an individual's ability to get a job but also mean they would have to report to local police should they move home.