

MEMORANDUM

TO: Conference Members
FROM: Executive Director
DATE: March 20, 2007

The WSO was asked at the 2006 WSC to send a copy of questions it receives from Conference members and our responses to all Conference members so that they can share leadership by responding to recurring questions in their Areas. The WSO believes that the following question and our response might be one of those topics.

Question: Since many employers have standard e-mail policies declaring any and all e-mail on the employer's mail server or network is the property of the employer, is personal anonymity protected when members correspond with each other regarding Al-Anon matters using an employer provided e-mail address?

Answer: Since we don't select the e-mail address that a Delegate discloses, we have no knowledge as to whether it is work-related or not. If it is a work address, the WSO assumes that the employer has approved of the use of company e-mail for personal business. If not, then the Al-Anon member, Delegate or otherwise, should not provide that address to anyone as it could lead to discipline or termination which could be far more serious for some than the issue of breach of anonymity. Since most e-mail addresses do not disclose full names and few actually identify the recipients as Al-Anon members, the sole receipt of an e-mail would not disclose the fact that one was an Al-Anon member. Many individuals work for not-for-profit organizations without being a recipient of the organization's services. For example, not all employees for the Heart Association or the Breast Cancer Foundation have the diseases that the organizations hope to prevent. Each Delegate needs to consider this fact as well as whether it is a good idea to use their full name in their e-mail address whether on a work computer or not before providing it to other Al-Anon members or any service arm, including the WSO.