

MAIL FOLDERS

INTRODUCTION

Outlook stores email and other kinds of data in a variety of folders. You can move messages into folders, create new folders, rename folders, copy and cut folders, delete folders, and more. Outlook includes the following default folders:

- **Inbox:** Incoming messages arrive in your Inbox unless you have created an Inbox rule to redirect them to another folder, or they are identified as junk email.
- **Drafts:** If you create or reply to a message, but do not have time to finish it right away, the message will automatically be saved to your **Drafts** folder. You can retrieve the message later to continue working on it.
- **Sent Items:** By default, a copy of every message you send is saved in your **Sent Items** folder.
- **Deleted Items:** When you delete a message, it is moved to the **Deleted Items** folder.
- **Junk Email:** Messages that have junk email characteristics but that aren't blocked by a spam filter before they reach your mailbox will automatically be moved to this folder.
- **Notes:** You must use Outlook to create or edit items in this folder.
- **Clutter:** Clutter helps you move low priority messages out of your Inbox so that you can easily scan for important messages.

“The **Favorite Folders** ... holds a special group of folders you can add or remove. You will place folders here that you access most often. Right-click on any folder to send it to your **Favorite Folders** so that it is always available. To see folders not in your **Favorite Folders** area, you may have to click the plus sign to expand **Inbox**” (Perry 2007, p. 435).

RIGHT-CLICK MENU FOR FOLDERS

Outlook, like every other Microsoft program, provides users with several different options for performing tasks. For example, many folder tasks can be performed by simply right-clicking a selected folder. These include:

- **New Folder:** Use this to create a new sub-folder in the folder you right-clicked.
- **Rename Folder:** Rename the folder. **Note:** You can't rename the default folders, such as the Inbox folder.
- **Delete Folder:** Delete the entire folder. Delete will move the folder to the Deleted Items folder.
- **Empty Folder:** Deletes everything in the folder, including any sub-folders.
- **Show in Favorites:** Adds the current folder to your Favorites.
- **Move:** Opens a window where you can select a folder to move this folder to. You can also move a folder by clicking it and dragging it to where you want it.
- **Mark all as read:** Marks every item in the folder as read.
- **Properties:** Allows you to manage your autoarchive, permissions, and other settings related to your account.

More detailed instructions for using the right-click menu, as well as other methods for folder tasks are below.

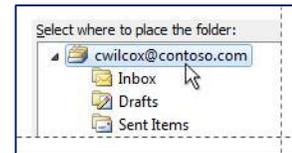
MAIL FOLDERS

CREATE NEW FOLDERS

To create a new folder:

1. If you are not already in *Mail* view, click **Mail** in the Navigation pane.
2. In the *Navigation* pane, select and *right-click* an existing folder, and click **New Folder**.
3. The *Create New Folder* dialog box appears.
4. In the dialog box, select a location for your new folder.

For example, if you want a folder under your Inbox, click **Inbox**. To put a folder on the same level as your default folders (**Inbox**, **Drafts**, **Sent Items**, and so on) select the account name, located above the folders.



Enter a name for the new folder in the **Name** box, and then click **OK**. The new folder appears in the Navigation Pane.

MOVE FOLDERS

Outlook gives you several ways to move a folder. However, default folders (Inbox, Sent, etc.) cannot be moved.

METHOD 1. MOVE A FOLDER BY DRAGGING

To move a folder by dragging:

- Click the folder you want to move and drag it to its new location.

METHOD 2. MOVE A FOLDER BY USING THE MOVE FOLDER DIALOG BOX

To move a folder by using the **Move Folder** dialog box:

1. Right-click the folder you want to move and click **Move Folder**. The **Move Folder** dialog box appears.
2. Select the new location for the folder and click **OK**.

CREATE A NEW FOLDER TO MOVE AN EXISTING FOLDER INTO

To create a new folder to move an existing folder into:

1. Right-click the parent folder.
2. Click **New**.

MAIL FOLDERS

ARRANGE MAIL FOLDERS

By default, Outlook lists your folders in alphabetic order. To reorder your folders, you rename them and then add numbers or punctuation marks to the folder names.

RENAME A FOLDER

To rename a folder:

1. Right-click the folder you want to rename and click **Rename Folder**.
The folder name becomes writable.



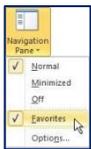
Note: You can't rename the default folders that Outlook provides automatically: **Inbox**, **Drafts**, and so on. If you right-click a folder and you don't see the Rename Folder command, you're trying to rename a default folder.

2. Add a number to the start of the folder name, or use a punctuation mark such as an exclamation point or underscore.
3. When you finish, click outside the folder name to save your change.

ADD A FOLDER TO YOUR OUTLOOK FAVORITES

You can make folders that you use frequently easier to use by putting them in your **Favorites**. The Favorites pane sits above the Navigation Pane, and it's on by default.

To display the Favorites pane:



1. Make sure you're in Mail view, then click the **View** tab.
2. In the **Layout** group, click **Navigation Pane**, and then click **Favorites**.

To add a folder to Favorites:

- Drag the folder to Favorites. Dragging copies the folder. It doesn't move it from the Navigation Pane.

To arrange folders in Favorites:

- To control the order of your folders in the Favorites pane, drag them up or down.

To remove a folder from Favorites:

- Right-click the folder and click **Remove from Favorites**.

MAIL FOLDERS

DELETE AND UNDELETE FOLDERS

DELETED ITEMS FOLDER

“When you delete a message, it is first moved to the **Deleted Items** folder. You can either let messages stay there, or you can set Outlook to automatically empty your Deleted Items folder when you sign out. Your administrator may have set up a policy to empty items from your Deleted Items folder after they have been there for a preset number of days. For example, there may be a policy that removes anything that's been in your Deleted Items folder for 30 days” (University of Wisconsin).

DELETE A FOLDER

To delete a folder:

- Right-click the folder you want to delete and click **Delete Folder**.

Outlook moves the folder and everything in it to the Deleted Items folder. As long as you don't empty your Deleted Items folder, you can restore anything you've deleted.

To restore a deleted folder:

1. Expand your Deleted Items folder.
2. Drag the folder that you want to restore to the desired location.

-or-

ail, on the **Folder** tab, in the **New** group, click **New Search Folder**.

1. Under **Reading Mail**, click **Unread mail**, and then click **OK**.

You can also select **Purge** to permanently delete an item. If you purge an item, you won't be able to use Recover deleted items to get it back. Purging a message won't remove it from any backups that were made before you purged it.

RECOVER DELETED ITEMS AND FOLDERS

When you accidentally delete an item from your Outlook mailbox, you can often recover it. The first place to look for a deleted item, such as an email message, calendar appointment, contact, or task is the Deleted Items folder in your mailbox. If you can't find it there, the next place to look is the Recoverable Items folder, which you can access by using the **Recover Deleted Items** tool.

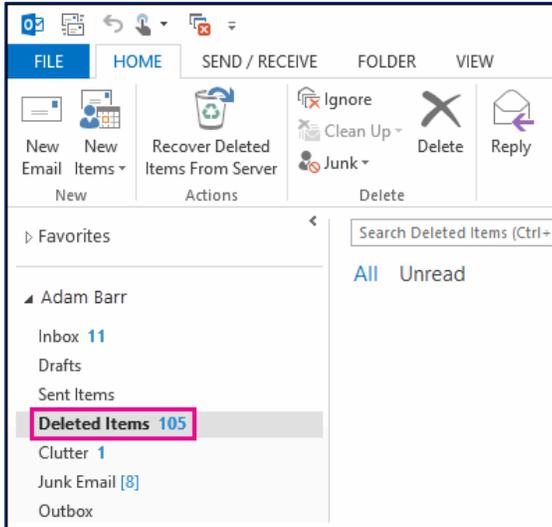
RECOVER AN ITEM THAT IS STILL IN YOUR DELETED ITEMS FOLDER

When you delete an email message, a contact, a calendar appointment, or a task, it is moved to the Deleted Items folder in your mailbox. It is the first place to look if you are trying to find an item that was deleted.

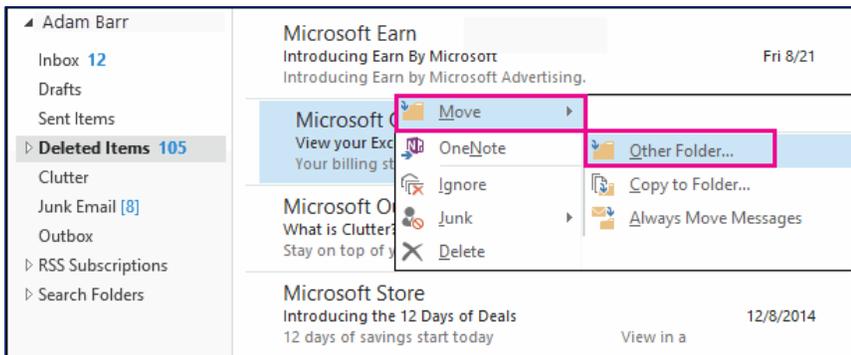
MAIL FOLDERS

To recover an item that's still in your Deleted Items folder:

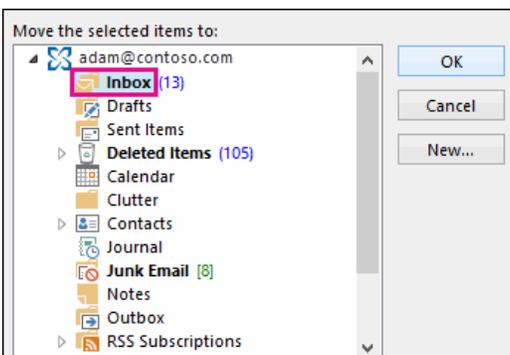
1. In Outlook, go to your email folder list, and then click **Deleted Items**.



2. When you find the message, right-click it, and then click **Move > Other Folder**.



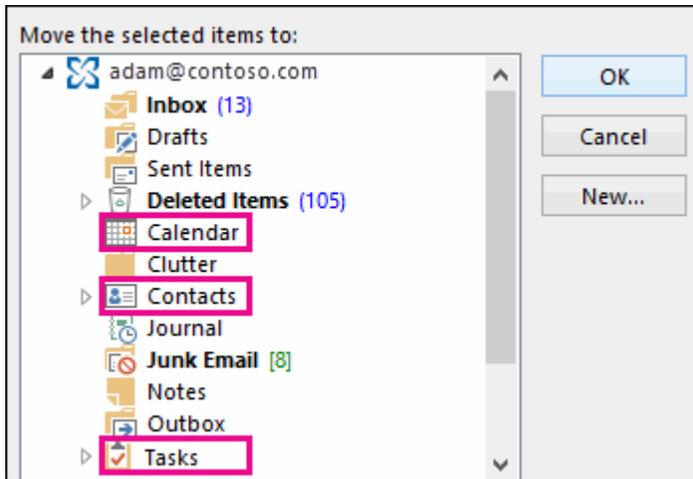
3. To move the message to your inbox, click **Inbox**, and then click **OK**.



MAIL FOLDERS

4. To recover other types of items, do one of the following:

- To recover a *calendar item*, right-click it, and then click **Move > Other Folder > Calendar**.
- To recover a *contact*, right-click it, and then click **Move > Other Folder > Contacts**.
- To recover a *task*, right-click it, and then click **Move > Other Folder > Tasks**.



Tips for recovering items in your Deleted Items folder

- If you delete a folder, it's moved to the Deleted Items folder and appears as a subfolder. To recover it (and all the items it contains), right-click the deleted folder, click Move Folder, and then select a folder to move it to.
- To recover a deleted contact in Outlook.com, see [this topic](#).
- Is Outlook automatically deleting items from your Deleted Items folder? There is a setting in Outlook Options that automatically empties the Deleted Items folder when you exit Outlook. Here's how to prevent this:
 - a. Click the *File* tab.
 - b. Click **Options** and then click **Advanced**.
 - c. Under Outlook start and exit, clear the *Empty Deleted Items* folders when exiting Outlook check box.
 - d. Click **OK** to save the change.
- Use the *Search Deleted Items* box (or press **CTRL + E**) to find the item you want to recover.
- To find other types of items, such as deleted appointments, contacts, or tasks, sort by the Icon column.
- Use the Advanced Find tool (Instant Search)

MAIL FOLDERS

- If you know the approximate date when you deleted an item, add the Modified column to the Deleted Items folder view. Here's how:
 - a. On the View tab, in the Current View group, click **View Settings**.
 - b. Click **Columns**.
 - c. In the drop down list under *Select available columns from*, select **Date/Time fields**.
 - d. Select **Modified** and then click **Add**. If you want, you can change the order that the columns appear.
 - e. When you're finished, click **OK**.

Then you can sort by the Modified column to group items deleted on a specific date. This is a good way to find messages from a deleted folder because they would all have the same modified date.

Note: Your administrator may have set up a policy to delete items from your Deleted Items folder after a certain number of days. Just like when you deleted an item, items deleted by a policy are moved to the Recoverable Items folder. If you can't find something in your Deleted Items folder, look for it in the Recoverable Items folder. The next section shows you how.

RECOVER AN ITEM THAT'S NO LONGER IN YOUR DELETED ITEMS FOLDER

If you can't find an item in the Deleted Items folder, the next place to look is the Recoverable Items folder. This is a hidden folder, and it's the place where items are moved when you do one of the following things:

- Delete an item from the Deleted Items folder.
- Empty the Deleted Items folder.
- Permanently delete an item by selecting it and pressing **Shift+Delete**.

You can recover email messages, contacts, calendar items, and tasks from the Recoverable Items folder. When you recover items from the Recoverable Items folder, they are moved to the Deleted Items folder. So after you recover an item, you can find it in your Deleted Items folder and then move it to another folder. If you recover a calendar appointment, contact, or task, it's also moved to the Deleted Items folder. From there, you can move it back to your calendar, contact list, or tasks. To find recovered items, just search for them in the Deleted Items folder.

To recover items from the Recoverable Items folder:

1. In Outlook, go to your email folder list, and then click **Deleted Items**.
2. Make sure **Home** is selected, and then click **Recover Deleted Items From Server**.
3. Select the item you want to recover, click **Restore Selected Items**, and then click **OK**.

Important: If Recover Deleted Items From Server is grayed out or isn't there:

MAIL FOLDERS

You might be working in offline mode. You may also not be using an Exchange account. If you don't have an Exchange account (for example, you're using Outlook to connect to an IMAP or POP account) you can't recover an item that's been permanently deleted or deleted from the Deleted Items folder. If you are connected to an IMAP account, you might be able to recover items from the Trash folder.

TIPS FOR RECOVERING ITEMS IN YOUR RECOVERABLE ITEMS FOLDER

To help you find a specific item in the **Recover Deleted Items** window, click the **Subject**, **Deleted On**, or **From** column header to sort items by that column. Note that the **Deleted On** date specifies when items were permanently deleted (by using **Shift + Delete**) or deleted from the Deleted Items folder.

Sort by the **Deleted On** column to help find messages from a deleted folder if the folder was permanently deleted by using (by using **Shift + Delete**) because they would all have the same date.

All items in the Recoverable Items folder—including contacts, calendar items, and tasks—are represented by the same icon, which looks like an envelope.

- If you have a lot of items in the Recoverable Items folder, it may be hard to find what you're looking for. Here are some tips:
 - If you're looking for a contact, sort by the **Subject** column and look for the name of the person. You can also sort by the **From** column and look for blank entries because contacts don't have a From field.
 - If you're looking for a calendar appointment or a task, sort by the **From** column and look for your name.
- To recover multiple items, click **Restore Selected Items**, and press **CTRL** as you click each item. You can also recover multiple adjacent items by clicking the first item, holding down the **Shift** key, and then clicking the last item you want to recover.
- Your administrator may have specified how long items in the Recoverable Items folder are available for recovery. For example, there may be a policy that deletes anything that's been in your Deleted Items folder for 30 days, and another policy that lets you recover items in the Recoverable Items folder for up to another 14 days. After this 14 days, your admin may still be able to recover an item. If you can't find an item in the Recoverable Items folder, ask your admin if they can recover it for you.

Unfortunately, if you or your administrator can't find an item in the Recoverable Items folder, it's probably been permanently deleted from your mailbox and can't be recovered.

SEARCH FOLDERS (**FEATURE ONLY AVAILABLE IN OUTLOOK 2013 AND LATER VERSIONS)

A Search Folder is a virtual folder that provides a view of all email items that match specific search criteria. For example, the **Unread Mail** Search Folder enables you to view all unread messages in one

MAIL FOLDERS

folder, even though the messages might be saved in different folders. When using search folders, keep in mind the following:

- Search Folders can't contain search results from multiple Outlook Data Files (.pst).
- Search Folders support prefix matching in the text strings that you specify. For example, if you want to include all messages that contain the word "rain" in the Search Folder, the Search Folder also includes messages that contains words such as "raining" or "rainy." Words such as "brain" are excluded.

ADD A PREDEFINED SEARCH FOLDER

To add a predefined search folder:

1. In **Mail**, click **Folder**.
2. In the **New** group, click **New Search Folder**.
Keyboard shortcut: To create a Search Folder, click **Ctrl+Shift+P**.
3. From the **Select a Search Folder** list, click the Search Folder you want to add.
4. If prompted, under **Customize Search Folder**, specify the search criteria to use.
5. To select a different mailbox to search, under **Customize Search Folder**, click the arrow at the **Search mail in** box, and then select the mailbox from the list.

To change the criteria for a Search Folder:

1. Right-click the folder in the Navigation Pane
2. Click **Customize this Search Folder**
3. Click **Criteria**, and then change the criteria.

Note: The criteria of Search Folders in the **Reading Mail** group, such as **Inbox**, **Drafts** or **Sent Items**, can't be changed.

CREATE A CUSTOM SEARCH FOLDER

To create a custom search folder:

1. In *Mail*, click **Folder**.
2. In the *New* group, click **New Search Folder**.
Keyboard shortcut: To create a Search Folder, click **Ctrl+Shift+P**.
3. From the *Select a Search Folder* list, click **Create a custom Search Folder**.
4. Under *Customize Search Folder*, click **Choose**.
5. Type a name for your custom Search Folder.

MAIL FOLDERS

6. Click **Criteria**, and then select the options that you want.
 - The *Messages* tab contains criteria on the message content or properties, such as sender, keywords, or recipients.
 - The *More Choices* tab contains criteria on other message conditions, such as importance, flags, attachments, or categorization.
 - The *Advanced* tab enables you to make detailed criteria. Under Define more criteria, click **Field**, click the type of criterion that you want, and then click the specific criterion from the list. Then in the **Condition** box and the **Value** box, click the options that you want, and then click **Add to List**. Repeat for each criterion that you want to add to this search folder, and then click **OK**.
7. Click **Browse**, select the folders that you want to be searched.
8. Click **OK** to close each open dialog box.

REFERENCES

Microsoft Corp. "Outlook Help."

Help Sheet compiled by Marsha Ann Tate, Ph.D., January 23, 2016. Last updated May 2, 2016. Questions or comment?
info@mtateresearch.com