

How to Create a Rule to Block Out-of-Office Messages

Many email clients provide options to create rules that filter messages before they reach your inbox. If you receive unwanted out-of-office messages from State Bar e-lists, you can set up an email rule to manage them.

Considerations Before Creating a Rule

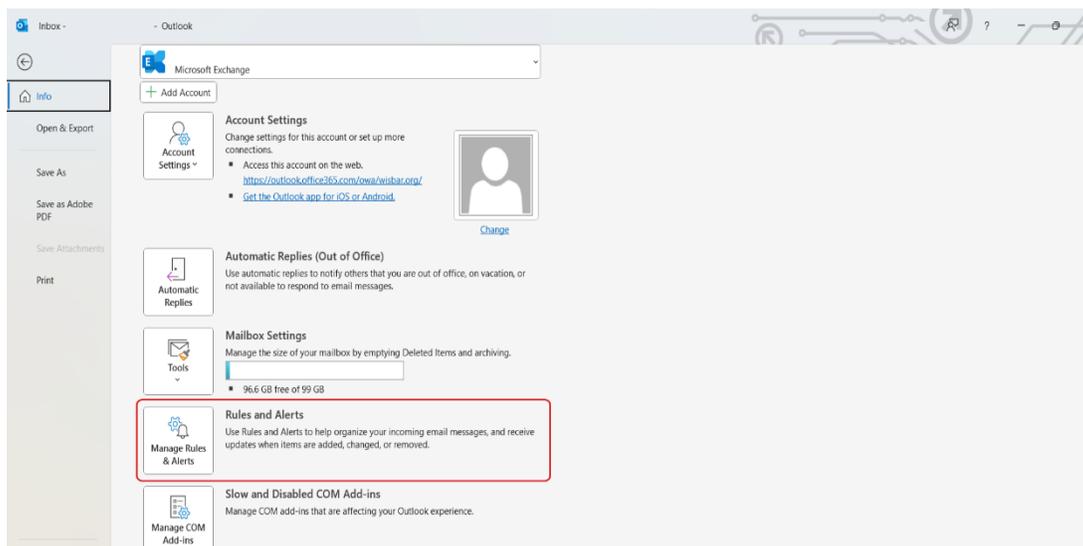
- If you rarely post or respond to a particular e-list, you may not need a rule.
- If you belong to a small e-list used for timely projects (such as board or committee e-lists), you may want to receive out-of-office messages.
- If the phrase "out of office" appears in valid subject lines, you should refine your rule criteria.

There is a wide variety of email software that is used by our members. To provide an **example** of the logic one may use to create a rule, we present the following Microsoft Outlook settings for blocking the out-of-office messages that are generated by individual State Bar e-lists. It is important to note that the actual **settings** for creating rules for all other email clients, such as Gmail or Outlook Web, will be different. While this will not stop *all* Out of Office messages, it should stop *most* of them.

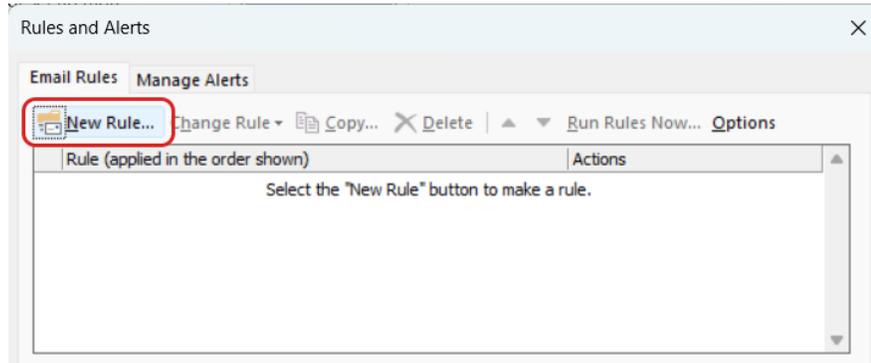
Creating a Rule in Microsoft Outlook (Microsoft 365, Outlook 2019/2021)

Steps to Filter Out-of-Office Messages:

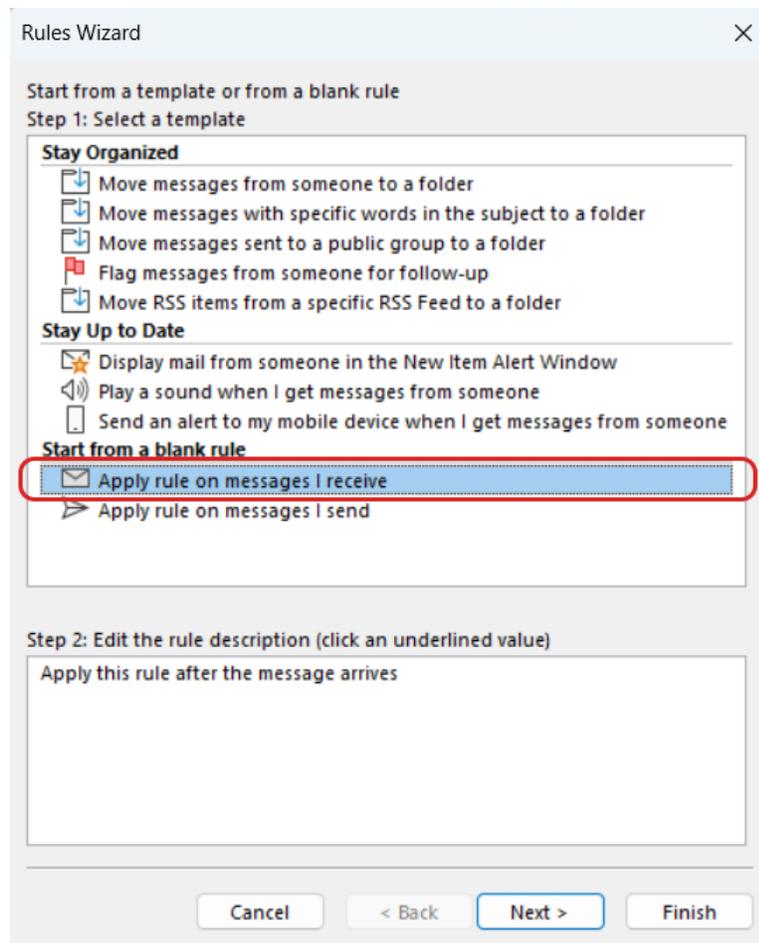
1. Open **Outlook** and go to **File > Manage Rules & Alerts**.



2. Click **New Rule**.



3. Under **Start from a blank rule**, select **Apply rule on messages I receive** and click **Next**.



4. In **Step 1: Select condition(s)**, check **with specific words in the subject** and **from people or public group**.

Rules Wizard

Which condition(s) do you want to check?

Step 1: Select condition(s)

- from people or public group
- with specific words in the subject
- through the specified account
- sent only to me
- where my name is in the To box
- marked as importance
- marked as sensitivity
- flagged for action
- where my name is in the Cc box
- where my name is in the To or Cc box
- where my name is not in the To box
- sent to people or public group
- with specific words in the body
- with specific words in the subject or body
- with specific words in the message header
- with specific words in the recipient's address
- with specific words in the sender's address
- assigned to category category

Step 2: Edit the rule description (click an underlined value)

Apply this rule after the message arrives

from people or public group
and with specific words in the subject

Cancel < Back Next > Finish

5. In **Step 2: Edit the rule description**, click **specific words**, then add:

- o "Out of Office"
- o "Automatic Reply"
- o Any other common out-of-office phrases Click **Add**, then **OK**.

Search Text

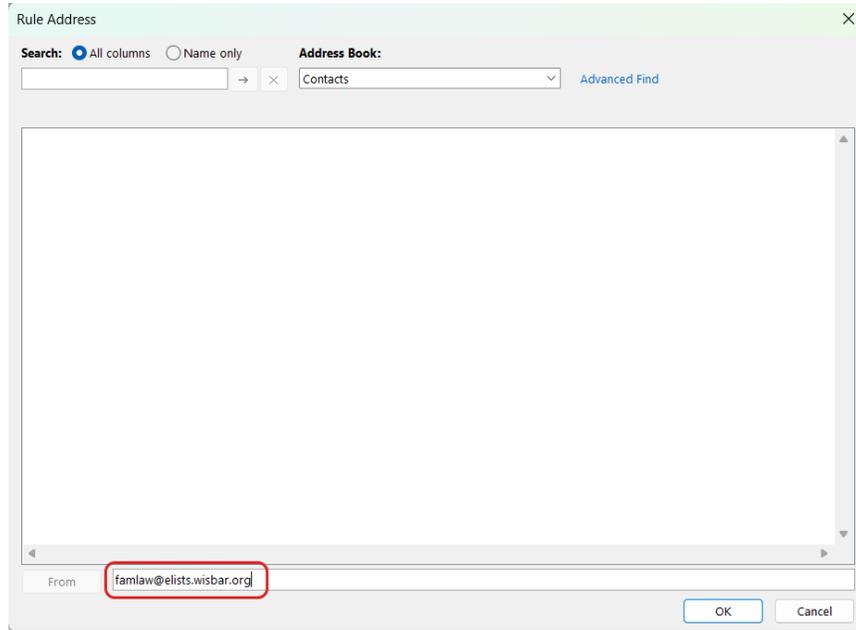
Specify words or phrases to search for in the subject:

Search list:

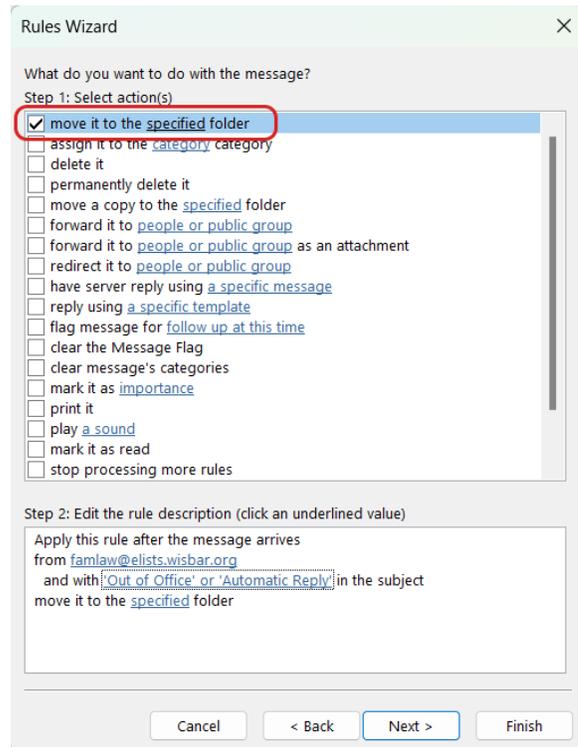
"Out of Office" or
"Automatic Reply"

OK Cancel

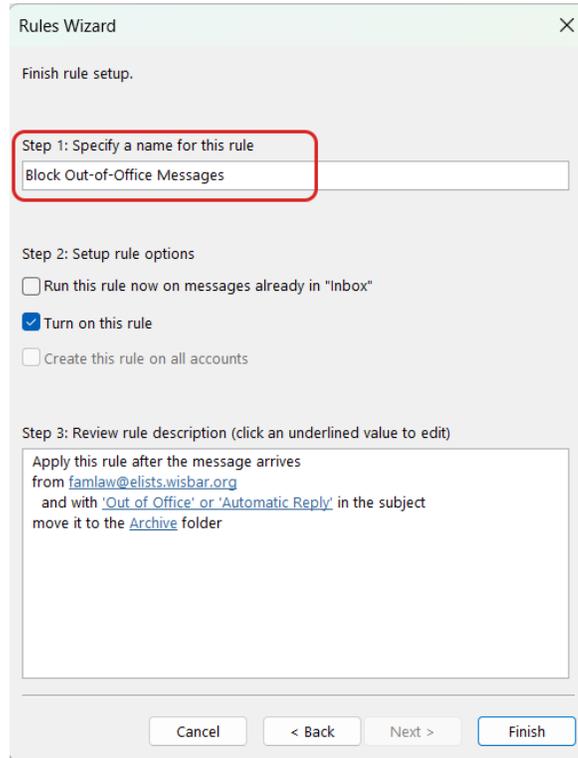
6. Click **people or public group**, enter the e-list email addresses (e.g., famlaw@elists.wisbar.org, yld@elists.wisbar.org), and click **OK**.



7. Click **Next**, then in **Step 1: Select action(s)**, choose **Move the message to a specified folder** (e.g., **Deleted Items** or a custom folder).



8. Click **Next** and review any exceptions if needed.
9. Name the rule (e.g., "Block Out-of-Office Messages"), check **Turn on this rule**, and click **Finish**.



Rules Wizard

Finish rule setup.

Step 1: Specify a name for this rule

Block Out-of-Office Messages

Step 2: Setup rule options

Run this rule now on messages already in "Inbox"

Turn on this rule

Create this rule on all accounts

Step 3: Review rule description (click an underlined value to edit)

Apply this rule after the message arrives
from famlaw@elists.wisbar.org
and with '[Out of Office](#)' or '[Automatic Reply](#)' in the subject
move it to the [Archive](#) folder

Cancel < Back Next > Finish

Creating a Rule in Outlook Web (Microsoft 365 Web Version)

1. Open **Outlook Web** and go to **Settings > View all Outlook settings**.
2. Navigate to **Mail > Rules**.
3. Click **Add a new rule** and name it (e.g., "Filter Out-of-Office Messages").
4. Under **Add a condition**, select **Subject includes** and enter:
 - "Out of Office"
 - "Automatic Reply"
5. Under **Add an action**, select **Move to** and choose **Deleted Items** (or another folder).
6. Click **Save**.

Setting Up Filters in Gmail

1. Open **Gmail** and click on the settings gear, then select **See all settings**.
2. Navigate to the **Filters and Blocked Addresses** tab.
3. Click **Create a new filter**.
4. In the **Subject** field, enter:
 - "Out of Office"
 - "Automatic Reply"
5. Click **Create filter** and select **Delete it** (or another preferred action).
6. Click **Create filter** again.

Final Notes

- These rules will not block all out-of-office messages but should filter most of them.
- Keep your rules updated if e-list email addresses or common phrases change.
- If you use a different email client, refer to its support documentation for similar filtering options.