

# Modern Work FAQ - Group, Shared, and Inactive Mailboxes

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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## Group, Shared, and Inactive Mailboxes

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### Group Mailboxes

#### 1. Do Microsoft 365 Groups require any licensing?

Setting up a Microsoft 365 Group doesn't require any additional licenses. However, if the Tenant Admin chooses to enable the Group Mailbox to have advanced Office 365 security/compliance features such as Archiving, In-Place Hold, eDiscovery (Premium) (previously Advanced eDiscovery), and Microsoft Defender for Office 365 (previously *O365 ATP*), then the mailbox requires use rights for these advanced features. To enable the Group Mailbox with use rights to advanced features, you may assign the appropriate license to the Organizer of the Group.

#### 2. What is an Organizer?

The Organizer of the Group is the person that creates the Group.

#### 3. It does not appear that it's possible to assign licenses to Groups. If it is not possible to assign licenses to Groups, how can we create a requirement for licensing of security/compliance features?

The requirement is to license the Organizer of the group for any security/compliance features that will be enabled for the Group. There is not a requirement to assign licenses to the group.

#### 4. What if a tenant has some users licensed for Office 365 E3 and some licensed for Office 365 F3, and they want to use In-Place hold for all their Groups?

To stay in compliance with the licensing rules, the customer would ensure that only Office 365 E3 users are organizers of Groups with In-Place Hold. It is possible for the Admin to limit the ability to create Groups to specific users.

#### 5. For a Group Mailbox with advanced compliance and security features enabled, what if there are multiple Owners of a Group, and the Organizer of the Group is no longer part of the Group?

If the Organizer leaves the group, then one of the Group Owners must be licensed for advanced compliance and security features enabled for the group.

**6. Does this licensing requirement for Group Mailboxes apply to Exchange Protection (EOP)?**

EOP is included with all Exchange services, and if the Group Organizer has use rights to EOP, then the Group will inherit use rights to EOP.

**7. Is the Group Organizer the same as the Group Owner?**

No, the Group Organizer is the person who created the Group. The Group inherits the licensing from the Group Organizer.

**8. If a company requires security/compliance for all their mailboxes, and if all users can create up to 250 Groups, how can an admin ensure that licensing requirements don't exceed available budget for licenses?**

If all users on a tenant are licensed for a feature, then all Groups created on the tenant would also be licensed for that feature.

**9. If all users on a tenant are licensed with Office 365 E3, and thus everyone accessing a group have In-Place Hold, is it still necessary to buy additional licenses for groups if In-Place Hold is enabled for groups?**

If all users on a tenant are licensed for Office 365 E3, then all Organizers on the tenant would be licensed for Office 365 E3, and all groups would inherit Office 365 E3 use rights from the Organizers.

**10. For a company that is required for compliance reasons to put all documents on In-Place Hold, how would they deploy Microsoft 365 Groups without a risk of licensing compliance issues for In-Place hold.**

If the company licenses all users on the tenant for Office 365 E3, this will ensure that all Groups on the tenant inherit use rights to In-Place Hold.

**11. I have a customer who purchased Exchange Plan 2. Is Office 365 Groups part of this SKU?**

Full Microsoft 365 Groups functionality is available to users that are licensed with F3, and E1 – E5. If the customer has only EXO P2, they will only have use rights for the Exchange Plan 2 related features of Groups (mailbox only).

**12. For a Group Mailbox with advanced compliance and security features enabled, what if the Organizer is the only Owner of the Group, and they leave the group.**

The group is not out of compliance. However, if a new user takes over the ownership of the group, the user must be licensed with any advanced security and compliance features enabled for the Group Mailbox.

**13. What an Organizer of a Group has Office 365 E3, and the Organizer is later unlicensed. Will the Group Mailbox continue to have use rights to Office 365 E3 security & compliance features?**

This is handled the same as if the Organizer left the Group. If there are other Owners of the Group, one of the Group Owners must be licensed for any advanced security & compliance features enabled for the Group Mailbox.

**14. For example, if an Office 365 E5 is the Organizer of the group, and all other member of the group are licensed with Office 365 F3, what happens if the Group Mailbox is enabled for E5 features and the Organizer leaves the group?**

If there is no owner of the group after the Organizer leaves the group, it is not out of compliance. However, if a new user takes over the ownership of the group, the user must be licensed with the E5 features enabled for the Group Mailbox.

## Shared Mailboxes

### 15. What is the difference between a Group Mailbox and a Shared Mailbox?

Microsoft 365 groups are used for collaboration between users, both inside and outside your company. With each Microsoft 365 group, members get a group email and shared workspace for conversations, files, and calendar events, and a Planner.

Shared Mailboxes are used when multiple people need access to the same mailbox, such as a company information or support email address. They are not associated with a Microsoft 365 Group.

Visit [Compare groups](#) for more information.

### 16. Are additional licenses required to create a Shared Mailbox?

No additional licenses are required to create a Shared Mailbox. There is no limit to the number of shared mailboxes, though the size is limited to 50GB. These mailboxes include core Exchange functionality.

### 17. When are licenses required for Shared Mailboxes?

Licenses are required for the shared mailbox for the following:

- Increasing the shared mailbox size limit to 100GB requires Exchange Plan 2.
- Auto-expanding archiving requires Exchange Plan 2 or Exchange K/Plan 1 + Exchange Online Archiving (EOA)
- Enabling E3/EXO P2 compliance capabilities (for example, applying a basic mail retention policy or litigation hold) requires Exchange Plan 2 or Exchange K/Plan 1 (F3/E1) + EOA.
- Enabling E5 capabilities (for example, automatic retention or classification, Microsoft Defender for Office 365 requires a license that includes the rights to those capabilities (for example, E5 Compliance, E5 Information Protection & Governance, E5 Security).

## Inactive Mailboxes

### 18. What is an Inactive Mailbox?

An Inactive Mailbox is a mailbox that was on Hold when it made Inactive. Inactive mailboxes cannot exist without Hold. An inactive mailbox allows a customer to retain mailbox data after an account has been unassigned.

### 19. What plan is required for a mailbox to be put on hold?

Exchange Plan 2 or Exchange K/Plan 1 + EOA.

### 20. Can Exchange Plan 1 users set their mailboxes as inactive?

Customers that have Exchange Plan 1 (by standalone or by Office 365 E1) do not have the ability to set mailboxes as inactive without completely deleting the mailbox data. If a customer with Exchange Plan 1 wanted to retain mailbox data after an employee left their company, for example, they would need to continue paying for the license. Conversely, they could purchase and assign an Exchange Archiving license to that user's mailbox which would then allow them to set a hold on that mailbox, thus allowing them to set the mailbox to inactive. This latter scenario would allow the customer to then reassign the Exchange Plan 1 and EOA license to another user.

### 21. Can Exchange Plan 2 users set their mailboxes as inactive?

Customers that have Exchange Plan 2 (by standalone or by Microsoft 365/Office 365 E3/E5) can set mailboxes as inactive by applying a hold to the mailbox. This frees up the license so it can be reassigned to other users while preserving the mailbox data.

### 22. Are customers still held accountable for the 90-day license reassignment policy?

Yes, customers are still required to recognize the 90-day license reassignment rule for USL licenses.

### 23. What license is required for customers to import archived mailboxes to Office 365 mailboxes?

An Exchange Plan 2 license is required to import and archive mailboxes. For customers importing offline mailbox data they will need to purchase Exchange Plan 2 licenses for those mailboxes in order to complete the

import and may then drop the licenses at their next Anniversary. The licenses may be reused to import multiple mailboxes so long as the customer abides by the 90-day reassignment rule.

**24. Are additional licenses required for advanced security/compliance features for an Inactive Mailbox?**

Yes. As with Shared Mailboxes, enabling E5 capabilities requires a license that includes the rights to those capabilities. For example, to enable Microsoft Defender for Office 365 (previously *O365 ATP*) requires purchasing a Microsoft Defender for Office 365 (previously *O365 ATP*) standalone or E5 Security license for the Inactive Mailbox.