

Northwestern University

Voice Mail - Getting Started

Accessing the Voice Mail System

The Northwestern University Voice Mail System is actually two networked systems - one on each campus. The phone number to access each system is different, as is the process for gaining access to your mailbox from on-campus versus off-campus:

On-Campus:

1. Dial **7-7777** (Evanston) or **3-5555** (Chicago) to access the Voice Mail System for your campus.
2. If you are calling from your own office phone, your name will be played back to you and you will then be prompted to enter your password. Enter your password followed by the # key.
3. If you are calling from another campus phone which has Voice Mail, you will hear the owner's name played back to you. Press the * (star) key to move yourself to the generic greeting and proceed as indicated under Off-Campus below, starting at step 2.
4. If you are calling from another campus phone which *does not* have Voice Mail, you will hear the generic greeting immediately. Go to step 2 below under Off-Campus.

Off-Campus:

1. Dial into the Voice Mail System for your campus at either **847-467-7777** (Evanston) or **312-503-5555** (Chicago).
2. You will hear a generic greeting. Press the # key and you will be prompted to enter your mailbox number. *Your Voice Mailbox number is usually the last five digits of your telephone number.*
3. After entering your mailbox number, you will be prompted to enter your password. Enter your password followed by the # key.

Password Protection

We will assign a temporary password to your mailbox and send that password to you via electronic mail. It is important to create a unique password for yourself that is between 6-10 digits. NU Information Technology cannot know your password, so if you forget it, you must submit a request form to have a new temporary password assigned.

The first time that you access your mailbox, you will be prompted to create a new password and to record your name and initial greeting. Your greeting should state your name and ask the caller to leave a specific message, e.g., *"This is Jane Doe of <department>. I can't take your call right now. Please leave me a detailed message, and I'll call you back as soon as possible."*

When you are prompted to create a new password, do not use your telephone number, do not use repeating digits (i.e. "1111"), and do not start the password with a zero ("0").

What to Expect

- If you have messages in your Voice Mailbox, you will be notified in one of two ways depending upon the type of telephone you have:
 - If you have a single-line telephone set, you will hear a distinctive "stutter" dial tone when you pick up your phone. When you hear this tone, dial **7-7777** (Evanston) or **3-5555** (Chicago) to enter the NU Voice Mail System.
 - If you have a multi-line telephone, one of the LED buttons on your phone must be designated for use as the message-waiting indicator lamp. That lamp will be lit by the Voice Mail System if you have messages waiting. Lift the receiver and press the button next to that LED lamp and you will be connected to the NU Voice Mail System.
- Your mailbox has limits on the number of messages that can be received and on how long they may be saved. For basic mailboxes, these limits are 20 messages and 5 days. To avoid having your callers hear the system message *"This mailbox is full and cannot accept new messages,"* please review your messages frequently and erase those that you have handled. Once a message is erased, it cannot be restored.
-

- If you are away for an extended period and your mailbox fills up, those messages will be retained until you access the Voice Mail System (new messages will not be taken). When you access the system upon your return, your messages may only be heard once (not saved).
- You can conduct multiple activities (record greetings, send or review messages, etc.) once you've logged into the system. Pressing the * (**star**) key returns you to the Main Menu.

Ten Tips for Effective Voice Mail

1. Identify yourself and the topic first.
2. State the key point by the third sentence. Don't surprise the recipient at the end of the message.
3. Address only one or two topics per message. Requests for information that are complete and concise allow the recipient to respond via voice mail.
4. Be brief. If you're rambling, re-record.
5. Keep content appropriate to the business at hand.
6. If you are sending a message to more than one person, state who is receiving it. If the list of persons receiving the message is lengthy, state it at the end of the message rather than at the beginning.
7. Talk live or write a memo if the topic is sensitive or complex.
8. Use Urgent Delivery option with discretion.
9. Don't ignore messages you receive. Reply promptly.
10. Review messages and erase frequently so your callers won't hear that your "mailbox is full."

How to Transfer a Caller to a Voice Mailbox

1. Press the **3WC** or the **Conf 3** key on your multi-line telephone, or briefly press the switch-hook on single-line telephones.
2. Dial the campus number of the local Voice Mail System (**7-7777** for Evanston, **3-5555** for Chicago).
3. Listen for the System Greeting.
4. Once the System answers, press the * (**star**) key.
5. Enter the 5-digit mailbox number of the intended recipient (usually the last five digits of their telephone number).
6. Again, press the **3WC** or the **Conf 3** key on your multi-line telephone, or briefly press the switch-hook on single-line telephones.
7. Stay on the line to hear the recipient's personal greeting.
8. Press the **RLS** key, or hang up.