

Mailman: List Manager's Quick Reference Guide

This document is intended to serve as a quick reference guide for mail list managers. It will briefly outline some of the more common tasks that are assigned to persons who "own" a list, normally a novice list administrator who only needs to know about a few of Mailman's features. Persons wanting a complete reference for all of Mailman's list administration functions should read the list administrator manual for complete information.

Keep in mind that Mailman is extremely self-documented. If you have a question about a particular setting or function, look for a link that will provide an explanation.

*Throughout the rest of this document, <domain> must be substituted with one of these domains: lists.esu10.org, lists.esu11.org, lists.esu15.org, lists.esu16.org, lists.k12.ne.us. Make sure you are using the correct domain. Also, <listname> must be substituted with the name of the appropriate list.

Accessing Your List Management Screen

When your list was created and you were designated the "owner" by the system administrator you should have received a welcome note informing you that your list was active, telling you the URL to visit for administrative functions, and informing you of your password.

If you did not keep this note, you should be able to find your list's administrative features by going to

<http://<domain>/mailman/admin/<listname>>

The screen that you access will prompt you for your list administrator's password. Enter it in the blank and then click the button to access your administration screen. If you do not know the password for your list then you will need to contact the system administrator to have it reset.

Changing Maximum Message Size

Mailman places a limit on the size of message that it will deliver to prevent large messages from disrupting the list server or user mailboxes. In some cases the default value may not be large enough to allow messages and file attachments to pass through in a manner suitable for your list's purpose. To change the limit:

Access your list management screen.

In the General Options section, near the bottom, locate the field for "Maximum length in Kb of a message body" field. Change the limit to something suitable, or enter 0 for no size limit.

Click the "Submit your changes" button at the bottom of the screen to put the changes into effect.

Usually it is not a good idea to allow large attachments to be sent to a listserv.

Removing a User From a List

Mailman allows the list manager to remove an individual from their mail list, but the method is not entirely intuitive. To remove a user:

Access your list management screen.

In the Membership Management : Membership List section, find the line with the e-mail address of the individual that you would like to remove. If there are a large number of subscribers, you may actually have to search for the user.

Check the unsub box by the address that you would like to remove.

Click the "Submit Your Changes" button at the bottom of the screen to put the changes into effect.

As an alternative, you can use the Membership Management : Mass Removal option to unsubscribe users. This alternative provides a few more options.

Add a User to Your List

Mailman allows a list manager to add people for their mail list, but the method is not intuitively named.

Access your list management screen.

In the Membership Management : Mass Subscription section, scroll down to the area labeled "Mass Subscriptions."

Choose the subscription options, such as subscribe or invite, send welcome message, and send notifications.

Type the address of the individual that you would like to add into the text box. If you would like to add more than one person, enter each address on a separate line.

If you would like to send a welcome message to the new members then make sure that the "yes" button is checked. This will send the new members their password and list configuration instructions.

Click the "Submit Your Changes" button at the bottom of the screen to put the changes into effect.

Note: Network etiquette generally frowns on opt-out lists -- adding unsuspecting persons to a list and then telling them that they can leave if they want. Do not use Mailman for unconscionable activities such as sending Spam.

Keep Unwanted Persons From Joining

Mailman allows you to prevent persons from joining your list without explicit approval of the administrator. To activate this feature:

Access your list management screen.

In the Privacy Options : Subscription Rules section look at the second field, labeled "what steps are required for subscription." Set the option to "require approval" or "confirm and approve" and click the "Submit Your Changes" button at the bottom of the screen.

Future subscription requests will cause Mailman to send you an e-mail message telling you that someone has tried to join your list. Go to the URL in the message and then use the on-screen form to accept or reject their request.

Keep Non-members From Sending to the List

Mailman allows you to prevent persons from sending to a list they aren't members of the list. To activate this feature:

Access your list management screen.

In the Privacy Options : Sender Filters section look at the setting near the bottom that says "Action to take for postings from non-members for which no explicit action is defined."

If "Hold" is selected, you will be allowed to moderate messages from non-members.