

# Outlook: Assigning Color Categories to E-Mail

## Assign a color category to an email message

Applies To: Outlook 2016 Outlook 2013 Office for business Office 365 Small Business

Color categories are a great way to get organized. Color adds visibility to your Outlook items so you can sort and find what you need. Color categories can be assigned to email messages in Outlook, and you [add contacts to color categories](#).

## Assign a color category to a message

A color category must be in the color category list before you can assign it. If a color category isn't listed, you can [create a color category](#) and assign it to an item for the first time. You can also choose from several default color categories and rename them to be more meaningful to you. Multiple color categories can be assigned to a message, and you can change the color associated with a category at any time.

To assign a color category, do the following:

- **For a message in your Inbox or any message list** Right-click the message, point to **Categorize**, and then click a color category.
- **For an open message** In the **Tags** group, click **Categorize**, and then click a color category.

The first time that you assign a default color category to an item, you'll be prompted to rename the category. You can also change the color of the category and choose a keyboard shortcut.

To see more categories or to create a category, in the **Tags** group on the ribbon, click **Categorize**, and then click **All Categories** to open the **Color Categories** dialog box. To assign a color category, select the check box next to the color category. That's also a quick way to assign multiple categories to an item.