

# **Asterisk Voicemail User Reference**

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by Jeffrey C. Ollie

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# Chapter 1. An Overview

The Asterisk PBX offers a highly flexible, highly capable voice mail system. Among the features that it offers are:

- A flexible menu system for directing inbound callers.
- A user directory allowing callers to look up extensions by name.
- Three different types of greetings.
- The ability to organize voice mail messages into folders.
- Optional notification of new messages through email. The notification message may also include an audio file containing the complete message.
- View the voice mail list and listen to messages through a web browser.
- Redirect extensions to cell phones or home phones as desired.
- Provide a paging or intercom system to all phones.
- Send group announcement messages to all mailboxes.

## 1.1. Types of Greetings

A greeting is a short message that plays before the caller is allowed to record a message. The greeting is intended to let the caller know that you are not able to answer their call. The greeting can also be used to convey other information like when you will be available, other methods to contact you, or other options that the caller can use to receive assistance.

The Asterisk PBX has three types of greetings:

### 1.1.1. Unavailable Greeting

The standard voice mail greeting is the “unavailable” greeting. This is used if you don’t answer the phone and so the call is directed to your voice mailbox.

- You can record a custom unavailable greeting (which is recommended—see below).
- If you have not recorded your unavailable greeting but have recorded your name, the phone system will play a generic message: “Recorded name is not available.”
- If you have not recorded your unavailable greeting and have not recorded your name (see below), the phone system will play a generic message: “The person at extension number is unavailable.”

### 1.1.2. Busy Greeting

If you wish, you can record a custom greeting used when someone calls you and you are currently on the phone. This is called your “busy” greeting.

- You can record a custom busy greeting (see below).
- If you have not recorded your busy greeting but have recorded your name, the phone system will play a generic message: “Recorded name is on the phone.”
- If you have not recorded your busy greeting and have not recorded your name (see below), the phone system will play a generic message: “The person at extension number is on the phone.”

### 1.1.3. Temporary Greeting

You can also record a temporary greeting. If it exists, a temporary greeting will always be played instead of your “busy” or “unavailable” greetings. This could be used, for example, if you are going on vacation or will be out of the office for a while and want to inform people not to expect a return call anytime

soon. Using a temporary greeting avoids having to change your normal unavailable greeting when you leave and when you come back.

- See below on how to record a temporary greeting.

## **1.2. Folders**

The Asterisk PBX allows you to save and organize your messages into folders. There can be up to ten folders:

### **1.2.1. The Default Folder List**

- 0** New Messages
  - 1** Old Messages
  - 2** Work Messages
  - 3** Family Messages
  - 4** Friends Messages
- (and others as you define)

When a caller leaves a message for you, Asterisk will put the message into the “New Messages” folder. If you listen to the message, but do not delete the message or save the message to a different folder, the Asterisk PBX will automatically move the message to the “Old Messages” folder.

When you first log into your mailbox, the Asterisk PBX will make the “New Messages” folder the current folder if you have any new messages. If you do not have any new messages the Asterisk PBX will make the “Old Messages” folder the current folder.

## **1.3. The Directory**

The Asterisk PBX voicemail system can provide a directory of the users on the system. The directory can be reached by dialing **411**.

## Chapter 2. Leaving a Message in a Mailbox

If you are not able to answer a phone call, Asterisk PBX will allow the caller to record a message that you can listen to later. The caller will first hear a greeting and some instructions before being allowed to record a message.

### 2.1. Record a Message in a Mailbox

The process of leaving a message in someone's voicemail looks like this:

1. The caller will dial the user's extension. If the extension is not answered, the caller will be transferred to voice mail.
2. The system will play the appropriate greeting. See below for more information on which greeting will be played.
3. The system will play some short instructions, followed by a beep.
4. The caller can then record the message, and optionally review the message.

While listening to the greeting or the instructions, the caller can press any of the following buttons:

- # Skip the rest of the greeting and instructions and immediately begin recording the message.
- \* Transfer out of the message recording application and log into the mailbox. The caller will be prompted for the password of the mailbox and then be able to listen to messages. This is one way users can access their own mailboxes.
- 0 Transfer to an operator or, if there is no operator extension, back to the initial system menu.

After the greeting and instructions, the caller will hear a beep and then the system will start recording a message. To end the recording, the caller can hang up the phone or press the # button for more options.

If the caller hangs up the phone to end the recording, the Asterisk system will put the message in your "New Messages" folder.

### 2.2. Options after Recording a Message

If the caller pressed the # button to end the recording, the caller will be presented with the following options:

- 1 Accept this recording.
- 2 Listen to the recording.
- 3 Re-record your message.
- 0 Transfer to an operator or, if there is no operator extension, back to the initial system menu.

If the caller presses 1, the message will be placed in your "New Messages" folder. If the user presses 0, the message will be cancelled and the user will be transferred to the operator (or, if there is no operator extension, back to the initial system menu).

## Chapter 3. Accessing Your Mailbox

### 3.1. Logging In

**Your extension: (this number is shown on your phone, e.g. 401)**

**Your initial voicemail password: 1234**

There are several ways to log into your mailbox.

#### 3.1.1. Logging in by dialing \*97 from your office phone

- Enter your password when prompted. You may press # after each entry if you wish or just wait for your entry to be accepted.

#### 3.1.2. Logging in by pressing the “Voice Mail” key from your office phone if your phone has this key

- Enter your password when prompted. You may press # after each entry if you wish or just wait for your entry to be accepted.

#### 3.1.3. Logging in by dialing \*98 from any office phone

- Enter your extension when prompted, then your password when prompted. You may press # after each entry if you wish or just wait for your entry to be accepted.

#### 3.1.4. Logging in by dialing \*, your extension number, and \* again from either an inside or outside phone

- Call directly to your own voice mailbox by dialing \* and then your extension number (e.g. \*104). This can be done from any office phone or from an outside line (press the keys when you hear the initial outside caller phone greeting).
- When you hear your own voicemail greeting start, press the \* button again to be prompted for your mailbox password.

#### 3.1.5. Logging in by calling the main phone number and pressing \*98 during the initial greeting

- If this feature has been enabled, you can log into the voice mail system from the initial system greeting by pressing \*98 when you hear the initial greeting start. You will be asked for your extension number and password just as if you were using an internal office phone and had dialed \*98.

#### 3.1.6. Logging in by using a web browser from an office computer

- Open a web browser and go the site <http://pbx> and then click on the “Voicemail and Recordings” link to check your voicemail. Alternately, go to <http://pbx/recordings> to go directly to the voicemail login screen. Note that this web site is configured to only work from inside the office for security. Log in using your extension number as the login name and your voice mail password as the password.

- This web site provides the ability to listen to and manage your voicemail messages, as well as configure a number of other settings related to your phone system account, such as call forwarding and call Follow Me.

## 3.2. The First Time You Log In

The first time that you log into your mailbox, you should configure your personal mailbox options. These include:

- Recording your name.
- Recording your unavailable greeting.
- Recording your busy greeting, if desired.
- Changing your password.

Please see instructions below on these steps.

## 3.3. Voice Mail Menus

### 3.3.1. Main Menu

The main menu will be the first menu you hear when you have logged in. Here are the main menu options:

- 1 Listen to new messages (the default) or listen to old messages if there are no new messages (see below).
- 2 Change folders (see below).
- 3 Advanced options (see below).
- 0 Mailbox options (see below).
- \* Help (repeat the menu options).
- # Exit from the voice mail system.

### 3.3.2. Advanced Options in Main Menu

This menu will include various less-used advanced options. In a typical installation, it will have no options other than pressing \* to return to the main menu.

### 3.3.3. Mailbox Options in the Main Menu

Pressing 0 from the main menu will present the mailbox options menu.

- 1 Record your unavailable message.
- 2 Record your busy message.
- 3 Record your name.
- 4 Record your temporary greeting.
- 5 Change your password.
- \* Return to the main menu.

#### 3.3.3.1. Record your unavailable greeting

- Log into your mailbox, then press 0, 1 (for your unavailable greeting, the default), and press # to end the recording. If you want to record just one greeting, record the unavailable greeting, as it is used most often.
- After a recording, press 1 to Accept, 2 to Review, or 3 to Re-record.

### **3.3.3.2. Record your busy greeting**

- Log into your mailbox, then press **0, 2** (for the busy greeting played when you are already on the phone), then record your greeting, and press **#** to end the recording.
- After a recording, press **1** to Accept, **2** to Review, or **3** to Re-record.

### **3.3.3.3. Record your name**

- Log into your mailbox, then press **0, 3**, speak your name, and press **#** to end the recording.
- After a recording, press **1** to Accept, **2** to Review, or **3** to Re-record.

### **3.3.3.4. Record your temporary greeting**

If you do not currently have a temporary greeting set (used when you will be temporary away from the office), this is the procedure to create one:

- Log into your mailbox, then press **0, 4** for the temporary greeting, then record your greeting, and press **#** to end the recording. Note that a temporary greeting overrides the normal unavailable and busy greetings as long as it is active.
- After a recording, press **1** to Accept, **2** to Review, or **3** to Re-record. You will hear a confirmation that the temporary message is in place.

#### **3.3.3.4.1. Changing or erasing your existing temporary greeting**

After you return to the office, the temporary greeting should be erased. The voice mail system presents different menu options when a temporary greeting is set. Log into your mailbox, then press **0, 4** for the temporary greeting menu.

- 1** (Re)-record your temporary message (see the procedure above).
- 2** Erase your temporary greeting.

### **3.3.3.5. Change your password**

- Log into your mailbox, then press **0, 5**, enter your numeric password, and press **#** to save the password.

## **3.3.4. Listening to Messages**

Press **1** to listen to the first new message waiting or, if there are no new messages, the first saved old message.

### **3.3.4.1. The Message Envelope**

If configured to do so, the voice mail system will initially play back the message envelope, which is a recording listing details about the message. Depending on how the voice mail system has been configured, the message envelope may consist of the following items:

- The position of the message in your list of messages
- The date and time that the message was received
- Caller ID information
- The duration of the message

Press **1** at any time during the playback of the message envelope to skip to the message itself. The voice mail system will then play back the message.

### **3.3.4.2. During Message Playback**

During the playback of the message, any of the following buttons may be pressed:

- \* Rewind the message by 3 seconds.
- # Fast-forward the message by 3 seconds
- 0 Pause the message playback. Press any other button to resume playback.
- 1, 4-9 Pressing any of these buttons will halt the playback of the message and perform the corresponding action from the post-message playback options (below).

### 3.3.4.3. After Message Playback

After the message has been played back, the system will play a prompt and wait for you to press a button:

- 1 Go to the first message in the current folder.
- 2 Change folders (see below).
- 3 Advanced options (see below).
- 4 Go to the previous message in the folder.
- 5 Repeat the current message.
- 6 Go to the next message in the folder (this will only be offered if there is another message).
- 7 Delete or undelete the message (only if it was just deleted in the current session).
- 8 Forward the message to another user (see below).
- 9 Save this message in another folder (you will be asked which folder to use).
- 0 Mailbox options (see “Mailbox Options in the Main Menu”, above).
- \* Help (repeat the menu options)
- # Exit the voice mail system.

This prompt will repeat after a short pause if no key is pressed.

### 3.3.4.4. Advanced Options

The following buttons may be pressed in the “Advanced Options” menu:

- 1 Record a reply message and send it directly to the mailbox of the person that sent you the current message (this is only available if the caller was calling from an internal phone).
- 3 Play the message envelope
- \* Return to the main menu.

### 3.3.4.5. Forward a Message to another User

Users arrive at this menu when forwarding an existing message to another user’s mailbox. After entering the mailbox number to which the message will be forwarded and pressing #, select from the following options:

- 1 Record an introductory message to play before the forwarded message. After the beep, speak your introductory message and then press # to save it and complete the forward.
- 2 Forward the message without recording an introductory message.
- \* Cancel and return to the main menu.

## 3.4. Changing Folders

If you select the option to change folders, the phone system will ask you which folder you wish to use.

Enter:

**1-9** The number of the folder to use (see “The Default Folder List”, above)

**#** Cancel the change folder operation.

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