

# Create custom actions rules

A rule is an action that Microsoft Outlook automatically performs on sent or received e-mail messages, and the action is based on conditions that you specify in the Rules and Alerts Wizard. There are third-party add-ins, however, that permit Outlook to perform additional, custom actions based on a rule condition.

---

## WHAT IS A CUSTOM RULE?

The Rules and Alerts Wizard in Outlook includes a number of actions that Outlook can perform based on conditions that you define, such as moving all e-mail messages from a specific person into a folder other than your Inbox. Some third parties offer add-ins that permit custom actions, such as automatically printing new e-mail messages. Microsoft does not provide these add-ins. They are written by third-party developers as dynamic-link library (.dll) files that must be installed on the computer running Outlook.

To find Outlook add-ins on the Web, use your Web browser to search for Outlook custom actions.

The following instructions will help you create a rule that runs a custom action add-in.

**NOTE** A rule with a custom action runs only on the computer where it is installed and only when Outlook is running.

## CREATE A CUSTOM ACTION RULE

To create a rule by choosing your own conditions, actions, and exceptions, do the following:

1. In the Navigation Pane, click **Mail**.
2. On the **Tools** menu, click **Rules and Alerts**.
3. If you own more than one e-mail account, in the **Apply changes to this folder** list, select the Inbox that you want.
4. Click **New Rule**.
5. Under **Start from a blank rule**, select either **Check messages when they arrive** or **Check messages after sending**, and then click **Next**.
6. Under **Step 1: Select condition(s)**, select the conditions that you want the messages to meet for the rule to apply.

7. Under **Step 2: Edit the rule description**, click each underlined value, enter the criteria for each condition, and then click **Next**.
8. Under **Step 1: Select action(s)**, scroll down the actions list, and then select the **perform a custom action** check box.
9. Under **Step 2: Edit the rule description**, click the underlined value **a custom action**.
10. Under **Choose an action to be performed**, select the add-in that you want to run.

**NOTE** If the add-in does not appear, the add-in is not properly installed for use by Outlook. You must contact the add-in developer for assistance.

11. To change the **Action** value, click **Change**.
12. Click **OK** to close the dialog box, and then click **Next**.
13. Under **Step 1: Select exception(s)**, select any exceptions to the rule, and then click **Next**.
14. To finish creating the rule, enter a name for the rule, and then select any other options that you want.

If you want to run this rule on messages that are in one of your folders, select the **Run this rule now on messages already in "folder"** check box.

To apply this rule to all of your e-mail accounts and the Inbox associated with each account, select the **Create this rule on all accounts** check box.

15. Click **Finish**.