

## How to set up Qmail auto reply (Out of the Office), vacation message manually using .qmail message processing file

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I had to **setup a QMAIL auto reply (Out of the Office) message** on 5 email addresses and since I haven't done it for a long time it took me a couple 20 minutes to consult Qmail (Life With Qmail <http://lifewithqmail.org> (great website!) documentation and read a couple of online forum threads until I finally remembered, how I used to be setting up a vacation message manually via qmail's **.qmail** file.

Of course *Setting qmail auto reply* can always be done via **QmailAdmin** or **VQadmin** .. - *Qmail Vpopmail web frontends* however on many Qmail mail servers **Qmailadmin** or/and **VQadmin** is absent due to some reason or even on a big mail servers the server doesn't run Apache at all. Hence it is good to know how to set qmail vacation message directly via plain SSH terminal connection and this is why how this article got born.

So here is how I **enable qmail auto reply** "manually", through *.qmail* for my email address *info@my-email-domain.com*:

### 1. Set a */var/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/.qmail* file with the following content:

```
| /usr/bin/autorepond 86400 3 /home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation/message  
/home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation
```

### 2. Create */home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation* directory

```
linux:~# mkdir -p /home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation/
```

### 3. Create */home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation/message* file with auto reply

### message

First create the message file with `touch` command:

```
linux:~# touch /home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation/message
```

Then put with `vim` or `mcedit` etc. an *auto-reply vacation message* similar to the sample below:

*From: info@cadiainsurance.com*

*Subject: We have received your message. Thank you!*

Dear Customer, we thank you for the interest in our services.  
A member of our team will reply promptly to your enquiry shortly.

#### 4. Set proper permissions for *vacation/message* and *.qmail* files

`/home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation/message` and  
`/home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/.qmail` files has to be owned by user/group  
`vpopmail:vchkpw`, e.g.:

```
linux:~# chown -R vpopmail:vchkpw /home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/vacation
linux:~# chown vpopmail:vchkpw /home/vpopmail/domains/my-email-domain.com/info/.qmail
```

If you are a qmail administration with the requirement to create **auto reply** message for employees going on a holiday often (in a middle sized company office), setting up the **out of the office auto reply** manually one by one is a time consuming, annoying task and "crazy" task. Therefore some time ago while still I was employed in a Bulgarian mid-sized company called *Design.BG*, I've written a tiny shell script which creates qmail email users vacation messages by passing few arguments.

Here is [my create\\_vpopmail\\_vacation.sh shell script](#)

Note that this script might have a lot of bugs and is not much tested, so read it carefully and test it before you put it for daily use ;)

**Happy Hacking! ;)**