Obsidian Ridge

1 in 7 Triangle CPA firms block forged email

A study of public email records by Obsidian Ridge, checked November 18, 2026

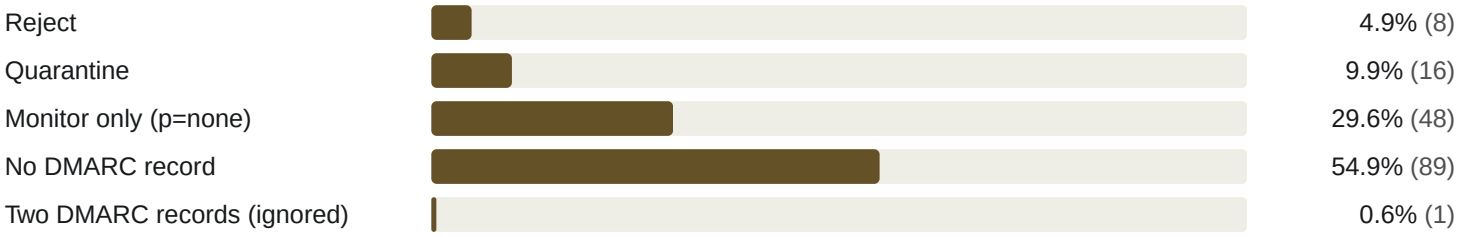
Anyone can put a CPA firm's address in the From line of an email. A free DMARC record tells Gmail, Outlook and other mail systems to junk or refuse those forgeries. We read the public records of 162 Triangle CPA firm domains that receive email. Most don't ask receivers to stop a fake.

14.8%
enforce DMARC (quarantine or reject): 24 of 162 firms

29.6%
monitor only (p=none): reports, but no instruction to stop a fake

54.9%
publish no DMARC record at all

DMARC SETTING, SHARE OF 162 FIRM DOMAINS



Reject plus quarantine is 14.8%. Across similar Triangle firms the enforced share is likely between 10.2% and 21.1% (95% interval). Check your own firm's records free at obsidianridge.io/email-check.

ALSO IN THE DATA

- **SPF is common; enforced DMARC is not.** 46.3% end SPF strictly (-all) and 41.4% softly (~all). SPF alone doesn't protect the address clients see in the From line.
- **7.4%** (12 firms) have neither SPF nor DMARC.
- **Mail hosts.** Microsoft 365 runs mail for 46.9% of the firms and Google Workspace for 26.5%. Enforcement was 20% among Microsoft 365 firms (15 of 76) and 7% among Google Workspace firms (3 of 43).
- **DMARC is free.** The work is finding every service that sends email as the firm.

FIXING IT WITHOUT BREAKING TAX-SEASON EMAIL

1. Check the firm's records at obsidianridge.io/email-check.
2. If there's no DMARC record, publish one at p=none with an address for reports.
3. Read the reports for a few weeks. Set up each service that sends as the firm (client portal, e-signature, payments, newsletter) for the firm's domain.
4. Move to p=quarantine, then p=reject, once the reports show only the firm's own services. CISA recommends the same order.
5. Plan the move outside the weeks before April 15 and October 15.

HOW WE DID IT, AND THE LIMITS

We took every firm in the NC State Board of CPA Examiners' free online database for Raleigh, Cary, Durham, Chapel Hill, Apex, Morrisville, Wake Forest, Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina and Garner with a current registration on November 18, 2026, and left out national and multi-state firms: 575 firms. We found a website for 172 of them and read their MX, SPF and DMARC records through Google's public DNS on November 18, 2026. Of those, 10 had no mail server and were left out, leaving 162.

Firms with no website aren't covered, and a firm could send from a second domain. DKIM wasn't measured. DNS records change; this is a snapshot. No firm or domain is named, here or anywhere else.

Full write-up and sources: obsidianridge.io/blog/business-security/cpa-firm-email-spoofing-dmarc-study-2026

Obsidian Ridge LLC · 964 High House Rd, PMB 2086, Cary, NC 27513 · (984) 999-7785 · ObsidianRidge.io

Public DNS records only; nothing on any firm's systems was touched. Information, not legal advice. The FTC Safeguards Rule doesn't name DMARC.