

Why move from .PST files to online storage?

Over the last several years, many users have been forced to reduce their mailbox size by creating “PST” archive files. These files contain content moved or exported from Outlook and stored either on their C: drive or on a network share (usually the U: drive).

There are several problems with this practice, including:

- PST files are prone to corruption (especially those stored on network drives), and a corrupted PST may prevent Outlook from loading
- PST files may not be correctly backed up while they are in use (when Outlook is opened)
- PST files are only able to be linked to a single instance of Outlook and they do not appear in webmail.

Moving your PST files to online storage avoids these issues; your Exchange account is highly available and stored in redundant data centers (and automatically backed up) and is accessible however you access it, through your desktop or laptop, through webmail and through any mobile devices running a mobile Outlook app.

While it made sense to use PST files back when mailbox size was restricted to 500 MB or 1 GB, with Office 365 (and “Cloud” storage) there is now an increased mailbox size of 100GB for your primary mailbox, and an unlimited online archive mailbox size. For on-premises users, COT will be increasing the mailbox size quotas as needed to ingest your PST files. With more space now available for your mailbox, it now makes sense to eliminate the use of PSTs in favor of having that information safely and conveniently stored in Exchange or O365.

PST files will continue to work in our email environment. However, PST files will soon become read only and at some point they will no longer be supported by the COT (and eventually not by Microsoft). We strongly recommend migrating from PST files as soon as possible.

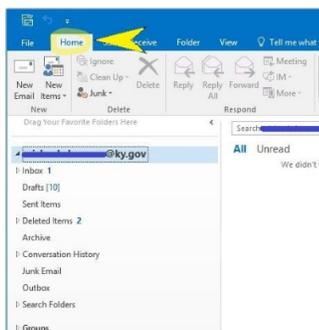
Should I Import PST Files to My Primary Mailbox, or to My Archive Mailbox? (O365 users)

O365 users have the option of importing PST files to either their primary mailbox, or to their archive mailbox. There are a few considerations in choosing whether to import to your primary or archive mailbox:

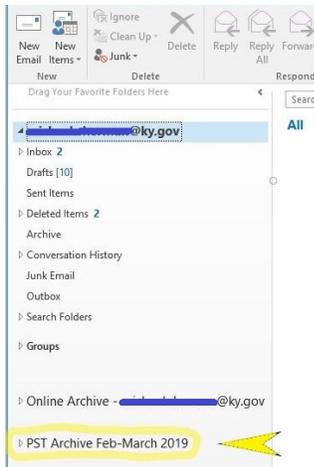
- If you import to your primary mailbox, you will have access to the imported messages from any method that accesses O365, including your PC or laptop, webmail, or any mobile device that used the Outlook Mobile app. If you import to your archive mailbox, however, you will not be able to access these messages from a mobile device.
- A primary mailbox synchronizes a copy of your messages with your Outlook client (in Outlook cached mode); an archive mailbox does not synchronize with Outlook, and thus does not send a copy of the messages to your local Outlook client. Your archive mailbox is available while you are connected to O365, but it is not available if you have no Internet access.
- If you import large PST files to your primary mailbox. It will increase the traffic on your network as it synchronizes to your Outlook client; as archive mailboxes are not synchronized, but reside in O365, it is less network intensive, but the messages are still available online if you access your archive mailbox.
- An O365 primary mailbox currently has a size limit of 100 GB, but an archive mailbox now has unlimited storage available.
- If you decide to import large PST files to the Inbox of your primary mailbox, be aware that it may greatly slow down any searches made against messages in your inbox. Microsoft suggests you import any large PST files to a separate folder that you create at the same level of the inbox for each PST (instructions on doing this are included later in this document)

Locating Your Mail Archive Folders

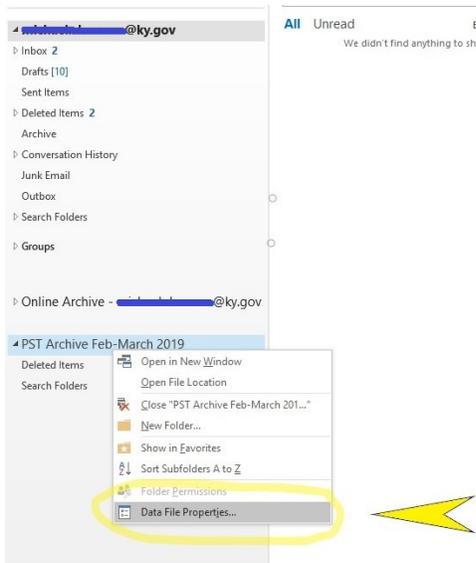
If you are not sure whether or not you have mail stored in archive files, you will need to open your Outlook email client and look at the inventory of folders on the left side. For Outlook 2010, 2013 and 2016, you will need to make sure that the **Home** tab is selected.



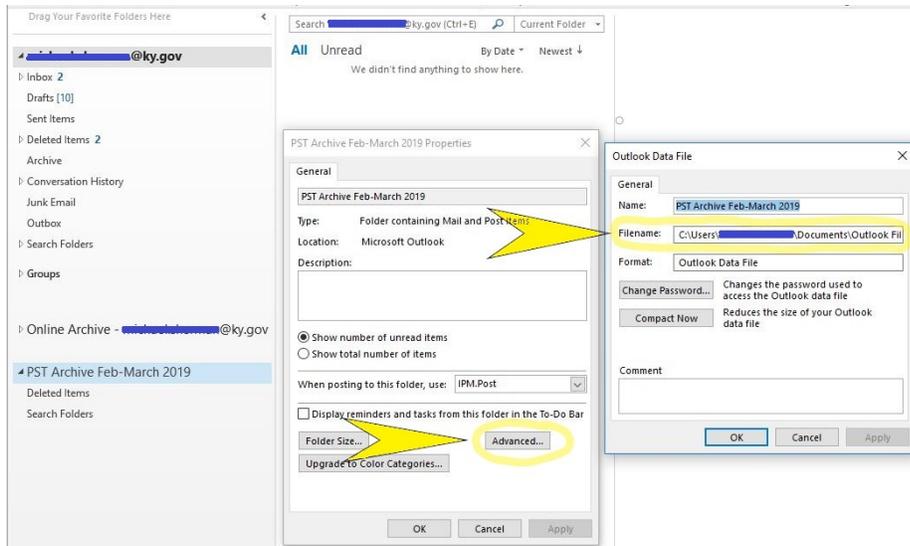
If your version of Outlook is accessing a locally-stored archive file, it will be listed under the other folder entries (Inbox, Sent Items, and Drafts) and set off with its own triangle icon.



If you would like to make sure that a listing is a PST file on your local system, click once on the name so that it is highlighted. Then right click to bring up the secondary menu. If **Data File Properties** is listed as an option, then the file that you have selected is a PST file.



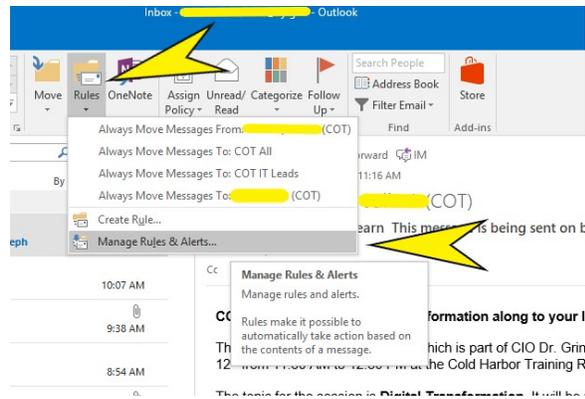
If you need to know the location of the file on your system, click on the **Advanced** button on the **Properties** box. The location of the PST file in your local file system will be listed under **Filename**.



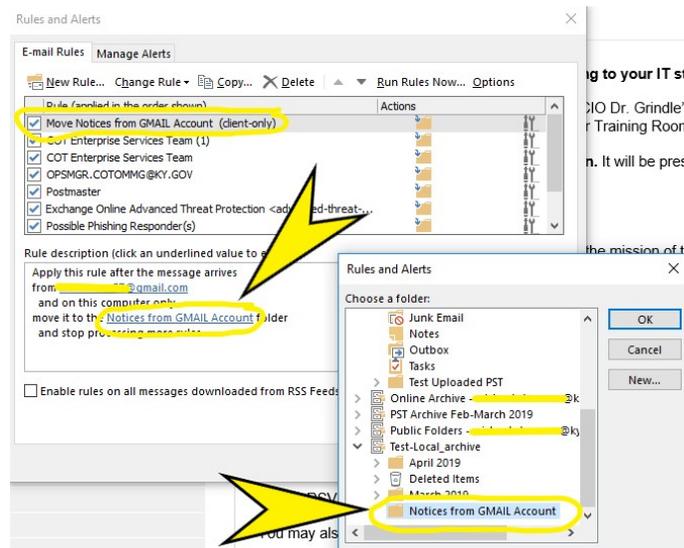
Check that No Rules are in Place to Move or Copy Items to a PST File

As we will be moving away from PST files, check that no rules have been set up to move or copy items to a PST file.

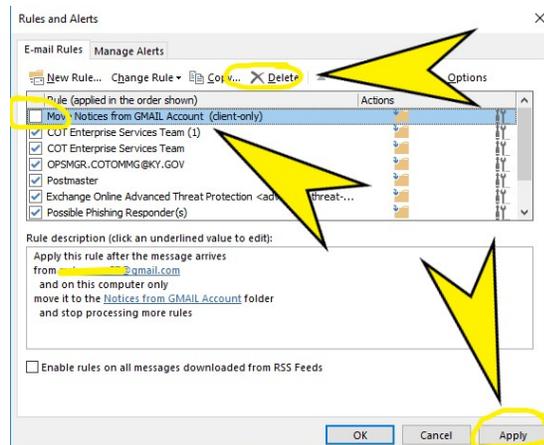
In the Outlook client, select Rules, Manage Rules & Alerts



Look for any rule that moves or copies messages to PST folders:

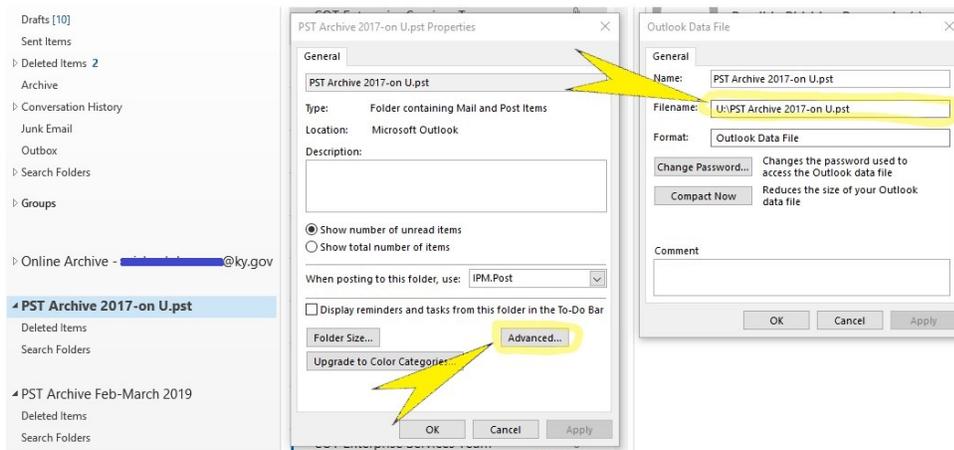


Deselect or delete any rule that moves or copies messages to a PST file, then select Apply and OK to close out the Rules Wizard.

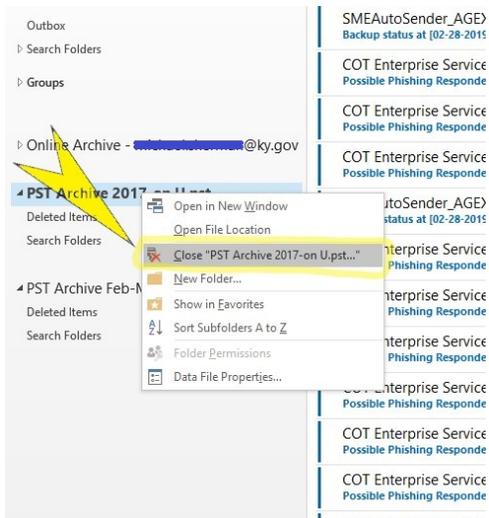


Moving PST File from Network Drive to Local Drive

In order to minimize potential issues when importing a PST file to O365 Online Archive, the PST file must be moved from any network drive it may be on to your local drive. First, determine that the PST file is located on a network drive using the instructions above to find a PST file's location, and note the name and the location of the PST file (in this case [U:\PST Archive 2017-on U.pst](#)):



Then right click on the PST folder in the folder list on the left pane of your Outlook client and select **Close**:



Once you have closed your PST,

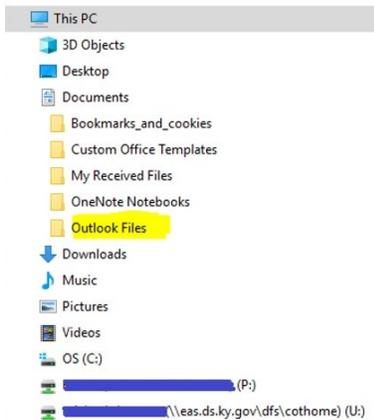
1. Open Windows File Explorer by Pressing the Windows Key + E on your keyboard



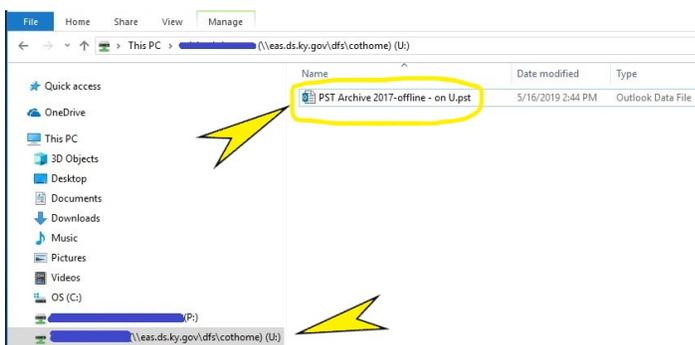
2. Or by selecting the File Explorer shortcut on the taskbar:



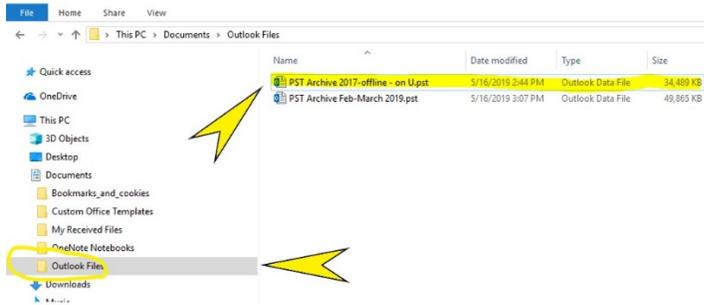
3. Under Documents you should have a folder called Outlook Files. If you do not you can create a new folder called "Outlook Files"



4. Click on your "U" drive. You should see all your files listed in the right hand side



5. Drag the .pst file in your “U” drive over to the Outlook Files. You should now have your .pst file in this folder. If you have more than one .pst file you can move them in this manner.



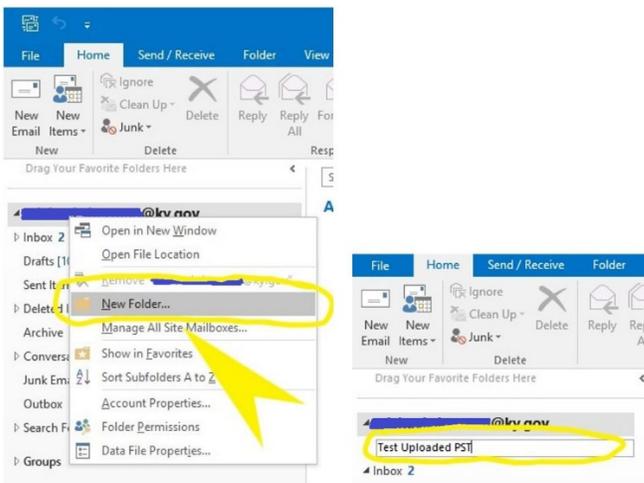
Depending on the size of the PST file and your network connection bandwidth, this could take anywhere from a few minutes to several hours.

Creating a New Folder to Contain Imported PST Messages

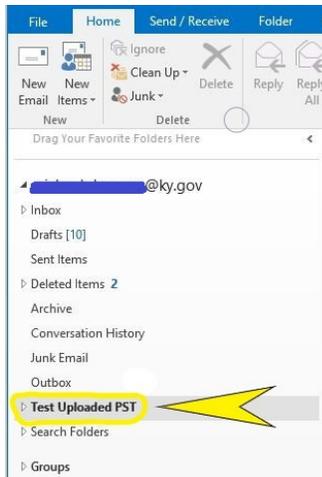
If you import a large PST directly into your Inbox, it may cause performance issues when searching your inbox; also, the folder structure of the imported PST might not be retained. You can avoid these issues by creating a new folder in your mailbox, and then import the PST file to that folder.

To create a new folder for PST import:

- 1) In Outlook, right Click on your user name in the folder list on the left side of your screen, and select Folder for the PST that you wish to import, then name the folder (in this example, it is named “Test Uploaded PST”). It creates a new folder of that name at the same level as your Inbox:



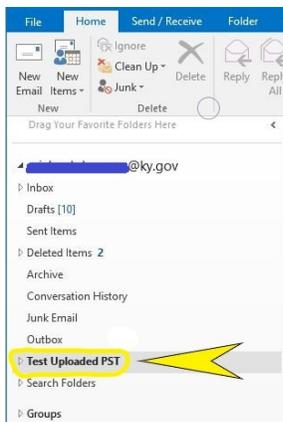
- 2) Then click on the folder you just created to highlight it (the folder will be empty)



Importing Mail from a PST File

If you have mail stored in a PST file, you can easily import those messages into your O365 or Exchange mailbox.

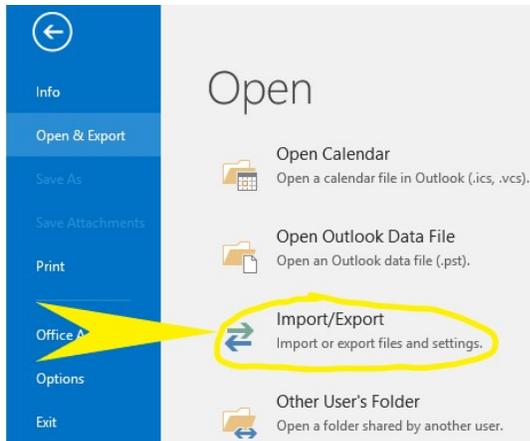
- 1) In the navigation pane in your Outlook client, click on the folder that you want to import the PST file into; if you want to import the PST into your Inbox, click on your Inbox to highlight it; if you have created a different folder to receive the imported PST file (in this example, "Test Uploaded PST"), click on that.



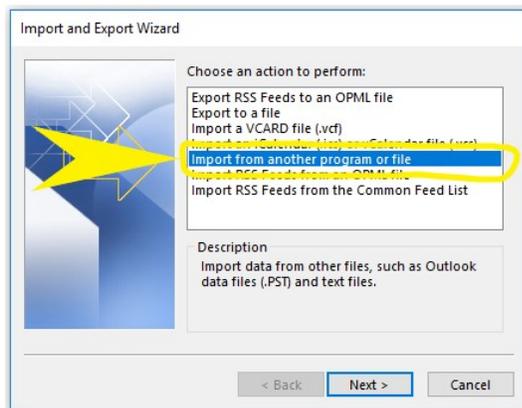
- 2) Then click on the **File** tab



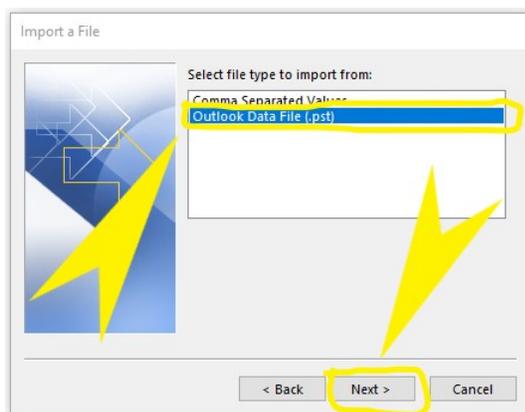
- 3) Select **Open & Export** and then select **Import/Export**



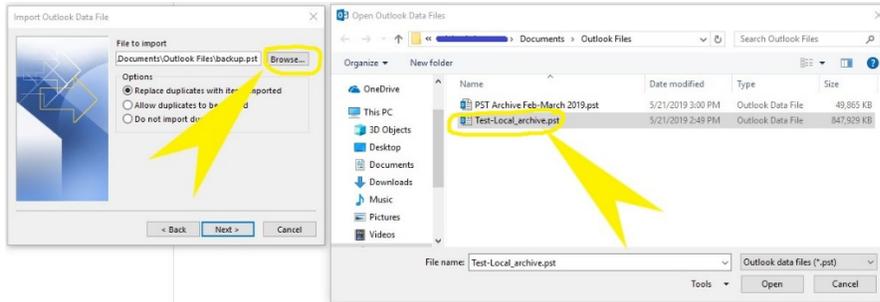
- 4) Select the **Import from another program or file** option from the “Import and Export Wizard” box that should appear, then select **Next**



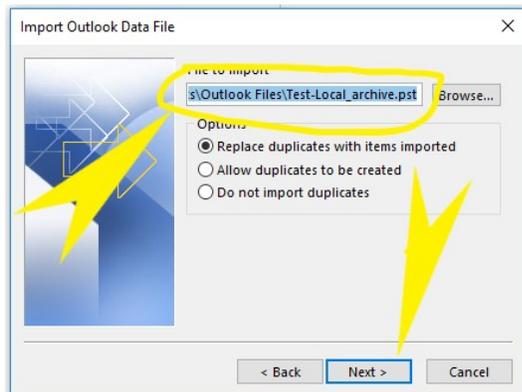
- 5) Locate and select the **Outlook Data File (.pst)** Option from the “Import a File” box that should appear. You may need to use the scroll bar to locate the listing. Select **Next**.



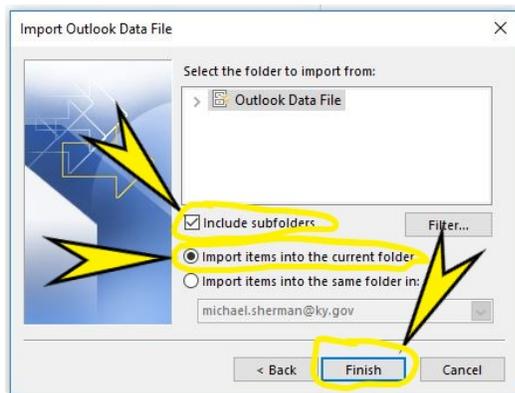
- 6) Use the **Browse** function on the “Import Outlook Data File” box to navigate to the PST file’s location on your PC or laptop.



- 7) When you have selected the PST file using the **Browse** function, the path of the file should appear in the white field next to the **Browse** button. Click the **Next** button



- 8) To import the PST into the folder you created, select **Import items into the current folder**, then click the **“Include subfolders”** box, and click on **Finish**.

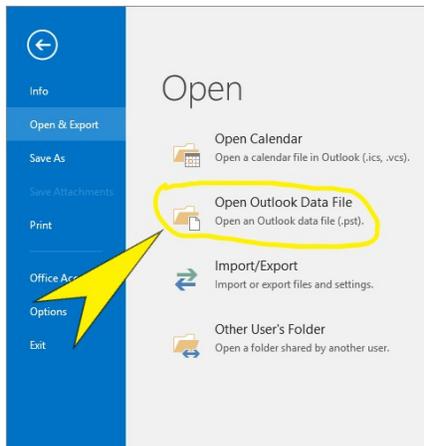


Depending on the size of the PST file and your network connection bandwidth, this could take anywhere from a few minutes to several hours.

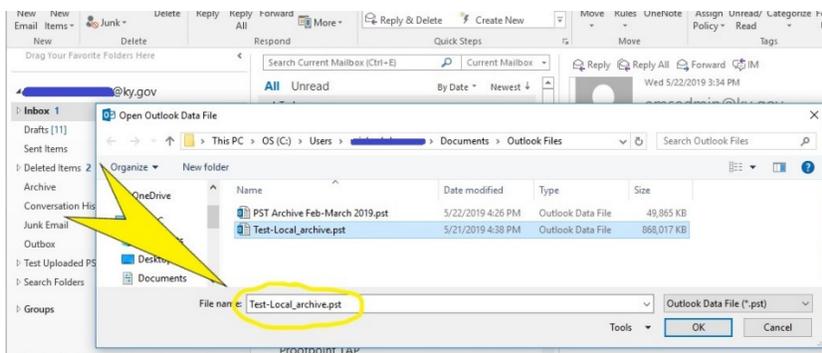
Moving Messages from a PST File Using Drag and Drop

If you don't have a large number of messages or you only wish to import specific folders and subfolders within the PST file, this can be a better option.

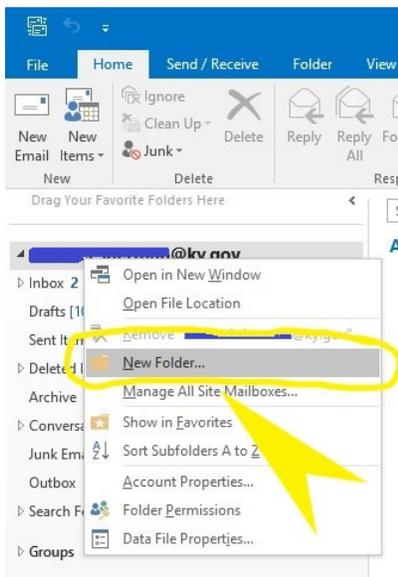
1. If your .PST is not already opened in Outlook 2016, choose **File | Open & Export**
2. Choose **Open Outlook Data File**



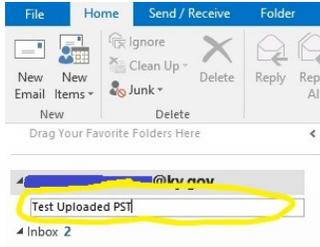
3. Find your .PST file (either C: or U: drive), select it and click **Open**.



4. In your Office 365 folder list, **right click** on your email address (or account name) and choose **New Folder**



5. Name the folder (e.g., Test Uploaded PST)



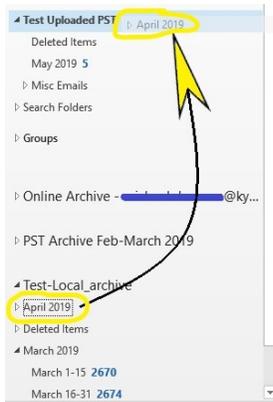
6. Next, in the folder list, locate your .PST file and **click the arrow** to expand the list of folders.



7. Select a folder and drag it to the new folder you just created under your Office 365 mailbox.



8. Repeat for each folder you need to move.



9. When finished, **right click** on the .PST folder and choose **Close "foldername"**

