

★ Apple Mail Rules — the clean truth

Rules in Apple Mail are:

- **Mac-only**
- **Device-side** (they run *on the Mac*, not on the server)
- **Only run when the Mail app is open on that Mac**
- **Do NOT run on iPad/iPhone**
- **Do NOT run on iCloud.com**
- **Do NOT sync between devices**



This is why you can't find them on your iPad — they simply don't exist there.

★ What Rules *can* do (on a Mac)

If you *did* have a Mac, Rules could:

- Move messages to folders
- Apply flags
- Add colours
- Forward messages
- Play sounds
- Mark as read
- Add keywords
- Run AppleScripts (very powerful)
- Combine multiple conditions (From, Subject, Contains, etc.)

But again — **all of this only happens on a Mac**, and only when Mail is running.

★ Why Rules don't exist on iPad/iPhone

Because iPadOS Mail is designed to be:

- Lightweight
- Battery-friendly
- Server-dependent
- Minimalist

It doesn't have:

- Background rule processing
- Local message scripting
- The macOS Spotlight index
- The automation engine that Rules rely on

So Apple simply didn't include Rules on mobile.

★ What you *can* use instead on iPad/iPhone

Since you don't have a Mac, your automation tools are:

✓ VIPs

People-based filtering.

✓ Flags

Single flag (provider-dependent), but still useful.

✓ Built-in Smart Mailboxes

Unread, Today, VIP, Flagged, Attachments, etc.

✓ Search

Apple's search is very fast and works across all accounts.

✓ Block Sender

Automatic handling of unwanted senders.

✓ Mute Thread

Silence noisy conversations.

✓ Server-side rules (if your provider supports them)

This is the *big one* for you.

Some providers let you create rules on the server:

- Gmail → Filters
- Outlook.com → Rules
- Some IMAP hosts → Webmail rules

These run **before** the message reaches your iPad, so they work everywhere.

If you want, we can explore these next.

★ Club-friendly explanation

“Rules in Apple Mail only exist on the Mac. They don't run on iPad or iPhone, and they don't sync. On mobile, you use VIPs, Flags, Search and Block instead.”