

Cellular Telephones and Wireless Communication Devices

Original Implementation: October 30, 2007

Last Revision: April 14, 2015

OVERVIEW

The university recognizes that certain positions require the use of a cellular telephone (cell phone) or other wireless communication devices, including personal digital assistants (PDAs) or smartphones, to conduct official business. This policy provides specific guidelines regarding the use of cell phones and/or wireless communication devices.

DEFINITIONS

Wireless Communications Device – cellular telephones, telephone/PDA combinations, and smartphones. For purposes of this policy, laptops, tablets, and personal computers are not considered wireless communications devices.

ELIGIBILITY

Each department is responsible for establishing whether a specific employee needs a cell phone or wireless communication device service. Criteria for establishing this need include:

1. Requirement to travel frequently on university business.
2. Large amounts of time spent away from the office.
3. A need to contact the individual after normal business hours on a frequent basis.
4. A need for others to be in constant communication with the individual.
5. Safety considerations.

If an employee meets one or more of these criteria, a department head/director may approve a request to provide either a university cell phone or wireless communication device or a communication allowance through one of the following options.

1. **University-provided cell phones or wireless communication device:**

The Telecommunications Department will determine two preferred vendors from which the university will contract cellular services. All university provided cell phones and plans will be acquired from one of the preferred vendors.

Departments electing this option must submit a Cellular Telephone Request and Justification Form to the assistant director of telecommunications and networking for each employee.

2. **Communication Allowance:**

The department may elect to provide a communication allowance to reimburse the employee for the projected cost of business related charges. The dollar amount of the cell phone allowance should cover the estimated business-related calls and a pro-rata portion of the monthly cost of the phone plan. Determination of the dollar amount of the allowance is made at the departmental level, but will be within guidelines and dollar limits established by the assistant director of telecommunications and networking. These levels are defined on the Communication Allowance Request Form. The communication allowance will be paid through payroll and will not be considered taxable income. The allowance does not constitute an increase to base pay and will not be included for percentage based pay increases or for retirement (TRS or ORP) calculations.

The communication allowance is established by submitting a completed Communication Allowance Request Form to the payroll office. Departments should also keep a copy of the form on file for each approved allowance.

The employee is responsible for communicating the telephone number to the department. The employee may, at his or her own expense, add extra services or equipment features as desired.

3. **Intermittent Use of Cell Phones for Business Purposes:**

Some departments may provide cell phones on an intermittent basis to their employees. Intermittent basis is defined as more than one employee assigned use of the phone during the month.

4. **Infrequent Use of Cell Phones for Business Purposes:**

If infrequent business calls are made by an employee who does not receive a communication allowance or university-provided phone, departmental approval can be given to reimburse the employee for business calls that exceed personal wireless plan minutes.

Reimbursement of these calls will be made through accounts payable through normal procedures for reimbursement of business related expenses. Appropriate documentation, such as a copy of the wireless plan billing statement and the stated business purpose of the call, should be submitted to support the reimbursement. Any reimbursement of business related calls will not be taxable to the employee.

Cross Reference: Telecommunication Services (16.28)

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Finance and Administration

Contact for Revision: Assistant Director of Telecommunications and Networking

Forms: Communications Allowance Request Form, Cellular Telephone Request and Justification Form

Board Committee Assignment: Finance and Audit