

Cellular Telephones

POLICY

The use of cellular telephones can offer convenience and efficiency for University employees having legitimate business needs for this technology.

When official business cannot be accommodated by the use of a landline telephone, pager, or other communication device, use of a cellular telephone may be required to perform University business functions. In such circumstances, department administrators and supervisors determine the business cellular communication needs of employees.

If an employee is required to carry a cellular telephone in order to perform his or her duties, the employee obtains University approval to purchase a personal cellular access plan and a cellular telephone. The employee receives a cellular telephone allowance based on the estimated business use. The allowance is processed and paid through Payroll Services. For tax year 2012, the allowance is not taxable income. Approved limits are indicated below and under [Allowance](#).

Applicability

Devices

This policy applies to wireless devices used for voice communication. Wireless devices used for text, data, or e-mail communication are not addressed by this policy unless they are also used for voice communication.

Noneligible Employees

Effective February 1, 2012, the following types of employees are not eligible to receive allowances for cellular telephone devices or services under this policy:

- Employee having an annual salary greater than or equal to \$100,000.

NOTE: An employee's annual salary is determined by multiplying his or her full-time monthly rate by the term (months per year) of his or her appointment (e.g., 9.0, 10.0, or 12.0).

- Overtime-eligible civil service employees.
- Overtime-eligible administrative professional employees.
- Temporary hourly employees (student and nonstudent).

Bargaining Unit Employees

Bargaining unit employees refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreement regarding cellular telephone allowance eligibility.

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Months Not Worked	Employees who are employed on less than annual appointments are not eligible to receive the allowance for months not worked.
Allowance	The allowance must be justified by business requirements. See also <i>BPPM 55.70</i> for instructions for establishing an allowance.
Not an Entitlement	The University does not consider the allowance for a communication device and plan to be an entitlement of employment by the University. The telephone allowance is not part of an employee's base salary, and may be changed and/or withdrawn by the University at any time.
Based Upon Job Functions	<p>The University allowance for a cellular telephone communication plan is not based on a particular title or position. Approval to obtain and use a cellular telephone is based on actual job requirements of a faculty or staff member.</p> <p>EXAMPLE: An individual with a "computer administrator" title who is overtime exempt might perform his or her work entirely in the field and/or might be on call after hours. Such an employee could require a cellular telephone in order to complete job-related functions.</p> <p>Department administrators and supervisors are responsible for determining and approving the appropriate allowance amount. The determination should include the appropriate number of plan minutes, long-distance calling options, data plans, and other plan features that are required for the performance of the employee's job responsibilities.</p>
Monthly Allowance	Effective February 1, 2012, allowance amounts for service plans may be selected in one dollar increments from \$10 to \$100 per month. The department and the employee negotiate the allowance based upon anticipated business use, but in no event may the monthly allowance exceed \$100. After there is a documented history of use, historical patterns are considered when determining the amount of the allowance.
Device Allowance	In addition to the monthly allowance for the service plan, the department and the employee may negotiate an allowance to pay for the device. The department may provide an allowance for part or all of a device for an individual based upon estimated business usage. The cost of telephone features not required for business use are the responsibility of the employee. If the employee desires a more expensive device for personal reasons the additional cost is also the responsibility of the employee. The department may provide an allowance for a new device no more frequently than once every two years.

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APPROVAL

A University allowance for the purchase of personally-owned services must be directly linked to the employee's official duties and responsibilities. Department needs dictate the type of plan, equipment, and level of service required. Purchase of equipment or reimbursement for the costs of cellular telephone calls require the approval of the department chair or equivalent official. If the cellular telephone is used by a chair or higher official, the official's supervisor provides approval.

Departments are responsible for determining the budgetary impact and whether or not an employee's job requires the use of cellular service.

Approval Documentation

The employee, chair/director, and supervisor sign a completed *Mobile Communications Services Agreement* form that includes:

- Justification for the business need for a cellular telephone.
- A description of departmental requirements for the telephone and service plan obtained by the employee.
- A description of departmental requirements for availability and use of the telephone, e.g., requirements for on-call use.

Sponsored Projects

The University receives reimbursement for telephone costs through the facilities and administrative costing process (*BPPM 40.25*). As such, direct charging for telephone costs is a rare occurrence.

Any costs of cellular telephones and/or services which are to be direct charges to a sponsored project must be specifically included in the budget proposal and approved by the sponsor. If not included in the budget, approval must be obtained from the sponsor by submitting a request through the Office of Grant and Research Development.

Plan Selection

The employee is responsible for the selection of and enrollment in an appropriate communication service plan. The plan must, at minimum, address the requirements identified by the supervisor and approved by the department administrator.

The employee may select service from any vendor whose service meets the approved requirements of the employee's job responsibilities. Employees should, when possible, purchase

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Plan Selection (cont.)

cellular service plans that are available from approved vendors participating in University, state, or regional contracts. In most cases, contracted discounts are available to employees. However, the employee discount amounts may vary, depending on the vendor. The WSU Information Technology Services (ITS) Communications and Network Services website provides recommended service plans as well as contact information for an ITS mobile communication device specialist. Access the website at:

infotech.wsu.edu/communications/

Notwithstanding the above paragraph, an employee may purchase any communication device or service plan that meets the departmental requirements specified by the supervisor and department administrator, regardless of price. However, the employee is responsible for any additional expenses above the University allowance approved by the department.

Department Notification

An employee receiving a University allowance for cellular service must provide his or her department with the telephone number of the communication device as soon as possible, and in no event later than five working days after activation.

Employee Responsibility

The employee is personally responsible for complying with any contract entered into with a communication service provider, including payment of all expenses incurred, e.g., long distance, roaming fees, and taxes. In the event that an employee leaves the position, he or she continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the cellular service plan.

Because the telephone is owned by the employee, it may be used for personal as well as business use, but must be available for the performance of responsibilities. In general, this means that the telephone must be in possession of the employee and turned on during times and circumstances specified on the approved Mobile Communications Services Agreement form.

Inactivation/Theft

An employee receiving a University allowance toward the purchase of a cellular device or service must notify his or her department chair or director as soon as possible and in no case more than five working days after inactivation of the communication service or loss or theft of the communication device.

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User Pays for Costs

Calls Made on Missing Device The assigned user is responsible for costs related to unofficial calls made while the telephone is missing.

Ending or Changing Contract If, prior to the end of the cellular telephone contract, a personal decision by the employee, employee misconduct, or misuse of the telephone results in the need to end or change the cellular telephone contract, the employee bears the cost of any fees associated with that change or cancellation.

EXAMPLE: The employee quits, and no longer wants to retain the current cellular telephone contract for personal purposes. The employee is responsible for the resulting costs.

In extenuating circumstances a department chair or director may choose to waive this requirement.

Device is Lost or Destroyed The employee is expected to take reasonable care of the cellular device. If an employee's required cellular device is lost or destroyed through the employee's negligence, the employee may be required to replace it at his or her expense at the supervisor's discretion. If the device is lost or destroyed due to a malicious, willful, or intentional act by the employee, the University pays no amount towards the purchase of a new telephone.

University Pays for Costs If, prior to the end of the cellular telephone contract period, a University decision unrelated to employee misconduct results in the need to end or change the cellular telephone contract, the University bears the cost of any fees associated with change or cancellation.

EXAMPLE: The employee's supervisor changes the employee's duties and the cellular telephone is no longer required for University purposes. If the employee does not wish to retain the current contract, change or cancellation fees are reimbursed to the employee by the University.

REVIEW

It is the department administrator's responsibility to review cellular telephone needs in his or her department at least annually in order to determine whether monthly allowance amounts should be maintained, changed, or discontinued.

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REVIEW (cont.)

The employee must provide, when requested by his or her supervisor, a monthly bill that includes total taxes and fees paid by the employee for the service. The employee is to indicate on the bill which calls are business related in order for the supervisor to assess the amount of business and personal use. If the monthly bills do not support the amount of the allowance, the supervisor may adjust or discontinue the allowance. An employee who believes that the single month submitted does not adequately reflect average use may submit additional monthly statements, also highlighting all business calls.

Changes to Allowance Amounts

When changes to allowance amounts are required, the department immediately processes a revised Mobile Communications Services Agreement form. Under *Explanation* the department indicates that the requested action is a revision to an existing allowance. The department must also immediately end the current monthly allowance appointment in the Temporary Employment System (TEMPS) and add a new appointment for the new monthly allowance amount (*BPPM 55.70*).

DEPARTMENTAL WIRELESS DEVICES

Telephones

Departments may obtain a cellular telephone and service plan for departmental use when the telephone is not specifically assigned to an individual. Use of these telephones is restricted to University business use only. Personal use of departmental cellular telephones is prohibited. Assignment of departmental cellular telephones requires prior approval of the responsible vice president.

The department maintains a record of all calls, incoming and outgoing, documenting individuals contacted and the University purpose of each call.

Because the telephones are used for University communication only, the department is responsible for the cost and contract obligations of the service plan. Such telephones remain the property of the University and must be immediately surrendered to the department upon request of the departmental administrator. Departmental service is immediately terminated upon cessation of the department need.

"Push-to-Talk" Devices

University departments may elect to purchase and provide "push-to-talk" mobile devices to faculty and staff. This applies to applications where specialized push-to-talk functionality can be restricted to University communications. The devices by nature and function must be restricted to University business.

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RECORDS RETENTION

Employee Owned

For employee-owned devices and plans, copies of the receipts, bills, or other valid evidence of purchase and use, are retained by the department for six years after the end of the current fiscal year. The approval/agreement forms are kept for six years after the termination of the agreement (*BPPM 90.01*). Users of cellular telephones should be aware that such records are subject to state of Washington public disclosure statutes (*BPPM 90.05*).

Approval forms/agreements, proof of purchase, and other related documentation must be retained for internal or external audit purposes.

Department Owned

For department-owned devices and plans the department retains records of purchase and use in conformance with the All-University Records Retention Schedules (*BPPM 90.01*). Departments are to maintain records that indicate that departmental cellular telephones are used for official business purposes only.

USE WHILE DRIVING

University drivers are to observe the requirements of any applicable laws or ordinances regarding cellular telephone use while driving.

*For assistance with transition to the new system, see the
Temporary Cellular Telephone Transition Guidelines*