

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE LETTER

SUBJECT: CELLULAR TELEPHONE ACQUISITION, USE AND REIMBURSEMENT

I. GENERAL

Cellular telephones (cell phones) may be issued to University employees who have a frequent need for remote telephone access or for use in the event of an emergency. University cell phones are provided for necessary, official university business purposes only.

Each university and the System Office should assign a central person or office the responsibility for coordination of cell phone acquisition and use. Each university and the System Office must have policies and procedures for ensuring cell phones are only issued to authorized users, use is appropriate, appropriate reimbursements are made, and cell phone users and their supervisors or other appropriate personnel are informed about the requirements of this APL. Such procedures may also address other issues, such as acquisition of phone equipment, provision of hands free devices where necessary, review and approval of billing statements, and instruction on what to do in case a phone is lost, stolen, or requires service.

II. CONTRACT AUTHORITY

- A. Consistent with the requirements of APL Section VII, A.2. *Purchasing Policy and Procedures*, the University will have one contract (to the extent possible and practical) for quality cell phone service throughout the System. The University of Maine System is able to obtain best pricing and service when contract negotiation is coordinated. When circumstances warrant, such as quality concerns, universities may negotiate and authorize other contracts.
- B. Only a System Purchasing Agent, Chief Financial Officers or their designees, are authorized to approve cell phone contracts on behalf of the University.

III. APPROVAL AND OVERSIGHT

- A. Each university should establish procedures for requesting and approving cell phone plans so that:
- approval and oversight is appropriate, and
 - necessary personnel, including both university and cell phone suppliers, receive consistent and timely information.
- B. Approving authorities should consider the following factors when reviewing requests for cell phone plans:
- The amount of time and frequency that the employee is away from access to land-based telephone services;
 - Level and area of expected business usage;
 - Emergency or other business reasons for needing a phone; and
 - Availability of department funds to cover the added costs of the equipment and services.

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- C. The plan approved for an employee, whether local or nationwide, should be the one that is most cost-effective, satisfying the basic needs and coverage area expected of the job. The current System contract requires a basic monthly line charge and a certain amount per minute for calling within the State of Maine. Expanded coverage outside of Maine is available for an additional monthly charge. Each university's contact person should be consulted for further details. **Employees will use the University of Maine System negotiated contract unless approved by the appropriate University contact.**
- D. As with the disbursement of all funds, segregation of duties should be present such that the person who incurs an expense is not the person who approves the expense for payment. An appropriate person should review and approve cell phone bills for payment.
- E. Cell phones that are no longer required because of termination of employment or change in job status shall be returned to an appropriate person and service shall be terminated. The person who reviews cell phone fiscal activity should ensure that the charges are discontinued.

IV. USE OF UNIVERSITY CELL PHONES

- A. As with all University resources, employees are expected to responsibly use cell phones. Irresponsibility or other misuse of cell phones will result in revocation of the phones and possible disciplinary action.
- B. University cell phones are provided for necessary, official University business purposes. The University, however, recognizes that because of the often unpredictable nature of University business, employees may need to occasionally phone family members or significant others. Such calls are considered business-related and are allowable, but employees should keep the length and number of such calls to a minimum.
- C. Each employee must review his or her monthly cell phone statement to determine whether charges are reasonable and to identify any charges requiring reimbursement to the University. The employee shall ensure reimbursements are made to the appropriate office (e.g., business office, cashier's office, etc.) within 30 calendar days of the statement date. Reimbursements should be posted to accounts which were charged the original cell phone expense.

V. CELL PHONE SAFETY AND SECURITY GUIDELINES

Employees should safely use cell phones following these guidelines whenever possible:

- Use of a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle is distracting and may impair proper operation of the vehicle. Where University business results in employee use of a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle, the employee should endeavor to acquire and use a hands-free device or stop the vehicle to use the phone. In all cases, proper operation of the motor vehicle shall take precedence over use of the cell phone.

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- Be aware that use of cell phones while operating a vehicle may be illegal in some states, cities, or other localities. Employees cited for illegal use of cell phones will be responsible for any resulting fines.
- Do not place the phone or equipment on the dashboard or in any other dangerous position such as in the air bag deployment area, as serious injury or death may result.
- Cell phones should not be used when vehicles are being fueled or while performing dangerous activities.
- Be aware that cell phone conversations are not always private or secure.
- Employees should take precautions to avoid acts of vandalism and/or theft, such as locking unattended vehicles and keeping cell phones out of view.
- Employees should be familiar with the operation of the cell phone and program frequently called and emergency numbers to minimize dialing.

VI. REIMBURSEMENT FOR CALLS ON PERSONAL CELL PHONES

- A. When employees make necessary University business calls from personal cell phones, reimbursement may be requested using a check request or other appropriate form specified by the particular university.
- B. Employees must identify business expenses on the detailed cell phone bill and submit the original bill with the request for reimbursement. Where an employee also needs the original receipt for tax or other purposes, the supervisor may accept a copy.
- C. Each university and the System Office will use a reasonable method to calculate reimbursement of University calls made on personal cell phones.

Approved by the Treasurer of the University of Maine System. Official copy on file in the Treasurer's office.

Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer