



SUB-TOPIC
CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT POLICY

Purpose: To provide guidance regarding the acquisition and use of cellular communications equipment and associated services for University business use.

Effective Date: September 1, 2008

Policy: It is the policy of The University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) to provide a cellular communications device and/or pager to those employees who meet eligibility requirements. Provision of such devices may be either through direct University purchase or a University subsidy of personally-owned devices/services. Administration of this policy shall fall within the Office of Business Affairs.

Definitions:

Communications Device - cellular telephones pagers, telephone/PDA combinations, batteries, hands-free devices, cases, carrying devices, chargers, cabling, and related miscellaneous equipment.

Official Business Needs – the employee frequently engages in work-related travel, the employee is frequently out of the office on university business, the employee's duties require being "on call" for essential services, and/or the employee is a member of key personnel needed in the event of an emergency.

Eligibility:

Employees meeting the official business need criteria above, as determined by the supervisor of their administrative unit, are eligible.

A. Acquisition of Communication Devices

1. University-owned Devices

An administrative unit may elect to acquire and provide a communication device to an employee whose job duties, in the opinion of the administrative unit head, necessitate the provision of such a device. A communication device acquired by an administrative unit and provided to an employee is considered to be University property and will be used by the employee for University business purposes only. Under IRS regulations, any personal use of a university-owned device is a taxable benefit to the employee and employees must retain records related to the business use of the device. Employees with university-owned devices may request copies of their cell phone records as needed from Telecommunication Services.

2. Employee-owned Devices

An administrative unit may elect to monetarily contribute to the employee's purchase and operation of a communication device when such employee's job duties, in the opinion of the administrative unit head, necessitate the provision of such a device. In such case, the monetary contribution will be provided in one or both of the following forms:

- **Communication Device Allowance**—provides a periodic monetary contribution towards the employee's personal acquisition of a communication device and payment of initial activation fees. A communication device allowance may be paid only once every two years.
- **Monthly Communication Plan Allowance**—provides a monthly salary supplement for the operation of a communication device. The supplement is provided to the employee for as long as the employee's administrative unit head determines that he or she qualifies under this policy.



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A communication device acquired by this method is the personal property of the employee and accordingly may be used in any way the employee deems appropriate. Any service contract the employee enters into regarding the acquisition or operation of a communication device acquired by this method is personal to the employee. The University will have no obligation or make any guarantees with respect to such service contracts.

B. Administrative Unit Responsibilities

The administrative unit head is responsible for the following:

- Determining whether the employee's position requires a communication device based on his or her job duties and responsibilities;
- Determining which of the allowed acquisition methods is most appropriate to an employee requiring a communication device (see section A of this policy for information about acquisition methods);
- Determining the source of funds to be used to pay for a communication device.
- Providing the employee with a copy of the Cellular Communications Equipment policy to ensure that the employee understands their responsibilities as stated in section C below.

If the communication device is owned by the employee (see section A.2 of this policy), the administrative unit head is additionally responsible for the following:

- Determining the appropriate monthly communication plan allowance for the employee within the monthly allowance amounts approved and published by the University (see section D of this policy for information about allowance rates). Approved monthly communication plan allowances will be provided to employees as monthly salary supplements.
- Completing the Communication Device Allowance Request form to document the approval and forwarding to the Payroll Office for processing.
- Retaining a copy of the completed and approved Communication Device Allowance Request form in the employee's administrative unit personnel file.
- Annually reviewing the allowance and allowance amount to ensure both remain appropriate given the employee's job duties.

C. Employee Responsibilities

1. University-owned Devices

Employees are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that the device is used for University business only.
- Maintaining records as evidence of the sole business use of the device.
- Ensuring the physical protection of the device from damage and unauthorized use.
- Ensuring that the device is returned to the University when it is no longer needed or the employee terminates employment with the administrative unit.

2. Employee-owned Devices

Employees are responsible for the following:

- Paying all amounts due as agreed between the employee and communication device service provider;



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- Providing the University administrative unit with the current access number or address of the communication device within five working days of activation; and
- Notifying the administrative unit head within five working days of inactivation of the device. An employee is prohibited from continuing to collect a monthly communication plan allowance when the device is no longer active or no longer needed for the performance of the employee's job responsibilities.

D. Communication Allowances

Allowances paid to the employee are considered taxable compensation and accordingly are subject to required tax withholdings and will be deducted from the employee's paycheck. Increasing the allowance to offset the tax withholding is not allowed. A communication allowance is not considered an entitlement, is not part of an employee's base salary, and may be changed and/or withdrawn by the University at any time. Allowance payments are not subject to retirement deductions.

1. Communication Device Allowance

a. Device Allowance Rates

Annually, prior to the beginning of the budget preparation cycle, the Manager of Telecommunication Services will determine the allowance rate for the acquisition and activation of communication devices. The rate will be determined based on estimates of current market acquisition and activation fee costs multiplied by approximately 50%. Such amounts are not intended to fully reimburse the employee for the total out-of-pocket costs of acquisition and activation given that the device is expected to be owned by the employee and used for both personal and business use.

The current allowance rate is listed on the Communication Device Allowance Request form.

b. Device Allowance Provisions

An employee may receive a communication device allowance only once every two years. Administrative units must process such allowances in accordance with the provisions established by the policy.

If an employee currently has UT Dallas-owned equipment and it is mutually agreed that the employee remains eligible for the communication allowance, the equipment may be transferred from the university to the employee. Contact Telecommunication Services to obtain information on how to initiate a transfer.

2. Monthly Communication Plan Allowance

a. Plan Rates

Annually, prior to the beginning of the budget preparation cycle, the Manager of Telecommunication Services will determine the monthly communication plan allowance rates for the operation of communication devices.

The allowances will be determined based on cost estimates of current market service plans multiplied by approximately 50%. Such amounts are not intended to fully reimburse the employee for their total monthly out-of-pocket costs given that the device is expected to be used by the employee for both personal and business use.



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The current allowance rates are listed on the Communication Device Allowance Request form.

b. Restrictions

An employee receiving a monthly communication plan allowance from The University of Texas at Dallas may not receive reimbursement for the same or similar device or service from another administrative unit of The University or another component institution of The University of Texas System.

A monthly communication plan allowance salary supplement may be established at any time during a fiscal year and may be changed or withdrawn at any time for any reason by the administrative unit head.

3. Budgeting

During annual budget planning, administrative unit heads should evaluate their employees' eligibility for the communication allowance and evaluate the ability to continue to provide monthly communication plan allowances in the context of its overall budget.

4. Funding

State funds may be used for communication device allowances. Restricted funds that specifically prohibit such allowances may not be used.

5. Continued Eligibility

Each allowance recipient must retain records of their most current detailed wireless statements in anticipation of periodic review.

Administrative Unit heads are required on an annual basis to review a minimum of one month of employee's current detailed wireless statements and to certify that eligibility remains appropriate.

6. Termination of Communication Allowance

Immediate termination of an employee's communication allowance may occur for any of the following reasons: 1) employee no longer meets the eligibility requirements; 2) there is a change in the employee's job responsibilities so that a device is no longer required; or 3) the employee fails to provide detail, if requested, supporting business use.

7. Reimbursements for Business Calls

Employees who are not receiving an allowance for communications services may be reimbursed for business calls made using a personal device. Upon approval of the sponsoring administrative unit, employees may be reimbursed when business calls cause the employee to incur additional costs (an itemized billing statement will be required).

Employees receiving an allowance for communications services may not be reimbursed for business calls except in extraordinary circumstances with the approval of the department head.

These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and complete documentation of the justification and extra costs incurred must be presented.