



Cell Phone Policy 6.60

Board Approval Date: 11-02-2004

Supersedes Policy Dated:

Policy Statement:

The rapidly changing world of wireless communications provides an opportunity for County Departments to ensure efficient, safe, and high-quality customer service to the citizens of Winona County. Based on identified needs in providing service, designated staff will either be provided with a cellular phone (hereinafter referred to as a cell phone) for County business purposes or a cell phone allowance toward the cost of the purchase/lease of an employee's personal cell phone, which will also be used for County business purposes.

The provision of a cell phone or cell phone allowance serves a public service in providing employees the ability to perform job-related duties, which are directly related to the governmental purposes for which the County was established.

Definitions:

Cell phone: The phone, adapter, battery pack, and other equipment specific to the phone used for County business purposes.

Business use: Work-related communications, which are required due to the nature of an employee's position.

Procedures:

Based strictly on business need, the Department Head will determine which position(s) in their department require a cell phone and whether the needs are best served through the allocation of a county-purchased/leased cell phone or through a cell phone allowance. If an employee opts to utilize the cell phone allowance method the employee will then be required to provide reliable cell phone service for all work-related needs. Some of the work-related needs include, but are not limited to:

1. Safety of self or others may be at risk.
2. Providing immediate communication with staff in the department and other agencies as required to coordinate programs or provide customer service.
3. Flexibility when schedule changes occur.
4. Retrieving messages from voice mail while working in the community.
5. Making telephone calls to clients and customers.
6. Personal emergencies including unexpected illness, car trouble, inclement weather, etc., for self and others.
7. When the employee's main work location is in the field where landlines and other primary radio/telephone communications are not available.



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County Purchased/Leased Cell Phones

Employees whose work requires the use of a cell phone, which is provided by the County, have two options. One option is to choose not to use the County-purchased phone for any personal calls. The second option is to reimburse the County for any personal use of the phone at the rate of \$10.00 per month for the maximum use of 100 minutes or \$19.00 per month for 200 minutes. In either case, the employee will be responsible for substantiating use by signing their bill to verify the personal time. If an employee exceeds the maximum minutes they will be charged a rate of \$.25 per minute. Monthly phone bills will be periodically monitored to observe personal use. Employees shall be required to reimburse the County for personal calls. Employees will turn in any County-purchased/leased cell phones in working condition or technologically capable when they are in an unpaid leave status and/or when no longer required for their job.

Employee Owned Phones

Employees whose work requires the use of a cell phone and who have been designated to receive a cell phone allowance will receive a monthly allowance in the amount determined by the department head up to the maximum plan allowances set by the County Board. Employees receiving an allowance are responsible for:

1. Providing proof of purchase/lease of cell service at intervals to be determined by the Department Head.
2. Providing information in a manner prescribed by the Finance Department to activate and maintain monthly allowance payments.
3. Replacement or repair of the phone will normally be the responsibility of the employee. However, if the cell phone is lost or damaged as a direct result of the work environment, the department head may approve reimbursement to the employee.

The cell phone allowance is intended to cover most of the costs of the employee's cell phone expenses related to work duties. Initial purchase of the cell phone, accessory equipment, and activation fees will be the responsibility of the employee. The employee will pay any costs exceeding the amount of the cell phone allowance. No allowance will be paid when an employee is in an unpaid leave status.

If the employee's monthly bill for work-related charges frequently exceeds the allowance, the department head may request an increase in the monthly allowance from administration to cover a plan with more airtime or reevaluate the employee's use of the cell phone. Reimbursement of work-related costs exceeding the cell phone allowance will require documentation supporting the excess, such as unusual usage, out of state or roaming charges, etc. The County Board must set and approve increases in allowance for the County Administrator.



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Taxability: The cell phone allowance will be paid through the County payroll system as taxable income. For determination of individual taxability, employees should check with their tax advisor.

Privacy: All personal cell phone statements are considered private data. If an employee submits a claim for reimbursement of related costs exceeding the monthly allowance, all or part of the employee's cell phone bill may become public data. Billings associated with a County-purchased/leased cell phone are considered public data.

Responsibilities

Employees receiving a County-purchased/leased cell phone or a cell phone allowance will be responsible for the following:

1. Retrieving messages on voice mail if telephone calls are missed on the cell phone.
2. Having the cell phone available for use during all hours of work and when the employee is subject to call.
3. Ensuring that use of the phone does not provide a distraction to the employee during work hours. This includes limiting personal use during work hours, and setting the cell phone to a "silent alert" mode during meetings and other times that an interruption is undesirable.
4. For safety reasons, use of the cell phone while driving a motor vehicle should be kept to a minimum.
5. Caring for the phone in a responsible manner, minimizing the chance of loss or damage.
6. Providing adequate security for the phone to prevent unauthorized users from finding client/work-related telephone numbers stored in the cell phone memory. Confidential or non-published numbers should not be stored in any "speed dial" function of the cell phone.

Department Cell Phone Guidelines

1. Applicable departments must establish criteria for determining work-related need for assignment of cell phone.
2. Department Heads will insure departmental procedures outlining the specific guidelines for use of a cell phone are developed and cover both County purchased/leased cell phone and/or cell phone allowance as necessary. The County Administrator will review these procedures for consistency.



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3. If the allowance method is used, these rules should establish criteria to determine what reimbursement tier should apply. (See Cell Phone Allowance section) The department must also determine the cost benefit to the County before providing an allowance.
4. If the lease/purchase method is used, the department must determine the cost effectiveness of the initial lease/purchase of cell phone and how continued service benefit the County.

Allowance Activation

For an employee to receive a cell phone allowance, the allowance and allowance amount must be authorized by the Department Head. A completed Cell Phone Allowance Authorization Form, the Cell Phone Allowance Agreement, and a copy of the employee's service agreement must be sent to the Finance Department for allowance activation. The Information Technology Director will review all requests prior to final authorization to evaluate the countywide communication benefit.

Employees receiving a cell phone allowance must notify their Department Head and the Finance Department immediately if they terminate their phone service. Likewise, if a Department Head determines that an employee no longer needs a phone allowance or the allowance amount should be adjusted, he/she must immediately notify the Finance Department to make the necessary change (See Allowance Change/Cancellation section).

Allowance Change/Cancellation

To change or discontinue a cell phone allowance, a new Cell Phone Allowance Authorization form must be sent to the Finance Department. If changes result in a new or revised service agreement, a copy of the agreement must also be attached.

Migration of Cell Phones

Employees designated to receive a cell phone allowance may be permitted to continue use of a county-owned cell phone and transfer the service agreement from the County to the employee. Employees may maintain the present telephone number. The employee may continue the service at the present level or may change/upgrade by contacting the service provider.

Internal Assistance

Information Technology will serve as a referral service for managers or employees interested in researching cell phone options or to provide assistance in migrating service agreements from the County to an employee.



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Cell Phone Allowance:

Tier 1 up to \$10.00/mo. Up to 100 min/mo.

Tier 2 up to \$19.00/mo. Up to 200 min/mo.

Allowance intended to provide payment toward cost of monthly service and associated taxes.

CELL PHONE ALLOWANCE AGREEMENT

I agree to the following regulations regarding the payment of a cell phone allowance to me:

1. I understand that I will be authorized a cell phone allowance to be used toward the cost of purchase/lease of a personal cell phone for Winona County business purposes.
2. I understand that this allowance will be paid to me through payroll as taxable income.
3. I understand that I will be required to provide reliable cell phone service for all work related needs.
4. I agree to provide required documentation to my department head and/or Finance Department as required to initiate and continue my entitlement to the cell phone allowance.
5. I understand my entitlement to the cell phone allowance ceases if I am in unpaid leave status.
6. I understand the cell phone allowance will cease immediately upon my termination of employment, whether for retirement, voluntary, or involuntary reasons. Should I terminate employment midmonth, I understand the allowance will be prorated.
7. I understand that any current or future obligation with the cell phone service provider is exclusively my responsibility without any liability to Winona County.
8. I have read and will follow the Winona County Cell Phone Policy. Failure to comply with this Agreement may result in cancellation of my entitlement to receipt of the cell phone allowance.

Employee Name (Print)

Employee Signature

Date

CELL PHONE ALLOWANCE AUTHORIZATION
(Use for Employee owned cell phone)

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ EMPLOYEE #: _____

DEPARTMENT: _____

Authorization relating to cell phone allowance to this employee as indicated below:

- Activate allowance payment @ \$ _____/mo.
- Change authorized payment amount to \$ _____/mo.
- Deactivate allowance payment. Deactivation Date _____

Service Provider's Name: _____ Contract #: _____ Ph #: _____

Allowance is intended to provide payment toward the cost of monthly service and, associated taxes.

Information Technology Director
(submit to I.T. Director prior to Dept Head)

Review Date

Department Head Signature

Date

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PAYROLL USE: Entered/Verified by: _____

Date: _____

TO BE REFLECTED IN PAYROLL DATE OF: _____
(Return form to the Personnel Department)

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Attach copy of service contract to this form when requesting activation or change of allowance payment. Return all copies of completed form to Finance Department, Attention: Payroll. Carbon copies will be distributed after processing is completed.

Please allow time for processing to coincide with payroll periods. Income will be generated the first pay period of each month.

CELL PHONE ALLOWANCE AUTHORIZATION
(Use for County owned cell phone)

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ EMPLOYEE #: _____

DEPARTMENT: _____

Authorization relating to cell phone allowance to this employee as indicated below:

- Activate deduction payment @ \$_____/mo.
- Change deduction payment amount to \$_____/mo.
- Deactivate deduction payment. Deactivation Date _____

Information Technology Director
(submit to I.T. Director prior to Dept Head)

Review Date

Department Head Signature

Date

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PAYROLL USE: Entered/Verified by: _____

Date: _____

TO BE REFLECTED IN PAYROLL DATE OF: _____
(Return form to the Personnel Department)

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Please allow time for processing to coincide with payroll periods. Deductions will be taken the first pay period of each month.