

## Using Cellular Devices for Work Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. *Why was the policy revised? What has changed?*

- Multnomah County Personnel Rules 3-35 (Information Technology) and 3-37 (Cellular Devices) have been revised to clarify permissible and prohibited uses of cellular devices used for county business, consistent with state ethics standards following an audit. Technology references have also been updated as technology has changed over time; outdated references have been removed (such as long distance calls from a cellular device); and current terminology has been included (such as texting).

### 2. *Where can I find the revised rules?*

- The rules are being posted on Commons on February 20, 2013. Employees are being asked to read and acknowledge both of these rules as E-Policies, by March 13, 2013.

### 3. *How do I get permission to use a cellular device for work?*

- Contact your department's administration for their process for obtaining this authorization. More specific information about county-owned devices and the allowance for using a personal device for work is provided later in this FAQ. Department of County Assets is working on streamlining county process for requesting and tracking this authorization so you may see changes to the forms or process in the future.

### 4. *Do I need authorization to use my personal cellular device for work?*

- Authorization is required before using a cellular device for work to ensure the security of county-owned information. If you do not want the allowance (reimbursement) for using your personal device for work, and you are only using it for work-related phone calls or to check work e-mail via a web browser, you do not need authorization. However, if county data will be stored on the personal cellular device, or you are requesting an allowance for using your personal cellular device, pre-authorization is required.

### 5. *What factors are considered in authorizing a cellular device for work?*

- Criteria for approving use of a cellular device for work include: the type of job; the proportion of job duties performed in the field; expectations for contacting an employee on a regular basis; requirements for being on-call; the role of the employee and whether she or he is a critical decision maker. Security and the sensitivity of work information (e.g., protected health information) might also be considered in approving the use and the type of cellular device. Departments periodically review employees' continuing need to use a cellular device for work.

### County-owned Cellular Devices

### 6. *How do I request a county-owned cellular device for work?*

- Check with your department about their process for requesting a county cellular device. Your department may have its own form and questions specific to their operations. Rule 3-37 has a link to a form developed by the Department of County Assets.

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7. *Can I choose what kind of device or data plan the county will provide me for work?*
  - No, the county will select and issue a device based on the needs related to the work and IT system and security standards.
8. *Are there limitations on my work-related use of a county cellular device?*
  - Yes. Employees are expected to use a regular (landline or desk) phone or system if available, before using the cellular device. For example, if a phone conversation will be lengthy employees should use a landline phone if available. Employees are also expected to minimize use outside of the home service area to the extent possible.
  - Use is also subject to the expectations for using any county system (such as a desktop computer or the email system) stated in Rule 3-35, and Rule 3-36 Social Media. For example, all uses of county systems must be lawful and inoffensive as described in 3-35-050.
  - Standards for brief and infrequent *personal* use are discussed more specifically in the following questions and answers.
9. *Can I make personal calls or send personal messages on my county cellular device?*
  - Yes, some personal use is permissible, with the following limitations: The personal use is on an employee's own (personal) time and not on work time; there is virtually no cost (direct or indirect) to the county of the personal use, and personal use is "brief and infrequent". For example, sending personal messages or receiving personal phone calls on a county-issued phone during work time would not be permissible. Sending a brief message on a break or after the work day would be permissible if it otherwise complies with the policies. In the past, the state ethics commission has described brief and infrequent as no more than 2 or 3 brief, personal calls a month for emergency reasons. Employees should not be using a county-owned cellular device in lieu of purchasing their own cellular device for personal communication.
10. *Can I stream data or music (for my personal use) on a county-owned cellular device or computer?*
  - Yes, streaming can occur on a county-owned cellular device as long as the cellular device is using a Wi-Fi connection and not the county's cellular data plan, and there is no interference with county business.
  - Employees may also stream data or music on a county computer as long as it doesn't interfere with county business, such as impacting system bandwidth.
11. *Can I download an "app" for my personal use on a county-owned cellular device?*
  - Yes, if there is no cost to the county and no interference with county business.
12. *What if I don't have a county desk phone and only use a cellular device provided by the county?*
  - If an employee is not assigned a county desk phone, the employee may use a county-owned cellular device in the same manner as a desk phone so long as there is no additional cost to the county.

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13. *Can the county track my usage of a county-owned cellular device?*

- Yes, Human Resources units or County Attorney's office may request reports detailing a specific employee's or employees' use of a county-owned cellular device. Reports of overall employee usage were reviewed in 2012 and will be reviewed periodically.

14. *What if my county-issued device is damaged or isn't working?*

- An employee should not attempt to repair or replace a county-issued device on his or her own. The Help Desk and a supervisor should be contacted with any concerns about the function of a county-owned device.

### Using a Personal Cellular Device for Work and Mobile Device Allowance

15. *Will the county reimburse me for using my personal cellular device for work?*

- Yes, if you are authorized to use your personal cellular device for work, for voice and/or data plans, a monthly allowance is issued as designated in Administrative Procedure FIN-18.

16. *Can I also receive an allowance for a tablet or other device (that's not a cell phone)?*

- Yes, when the business need is authorized. Tablets are generally limited to data plans only.

17. *Can I receive an allowance for more than one device (a phone and a tablet)?*

- Yes, however the maximum amount of the monthly allowance is \$65.00 total, for all devices, for voice and data plans.

18. *Who approves the allowance?*

- Your department director or designee.

19. *What information do I need to provide to get the allowance?*

- You will need to submit a copy of your cellular plan bill verifying what you are charged when you initially request the allowance, and at the end of each calendar year for periodic review. Under no circumstance can an employee receive an allowance that's higher than their actual billed rate.

20. *What if my family's cellular/data plan is not under my name?*

- You will need to acknowledge in writing that you are the owner of the cellular device and provide the phone number of the device. The bills you provide need to clearly indicate the charges for your cellular account.

21. *Can I get an allowance retroactively?*

- Yes, allowances can be authorized retroactively with department and CFO approval as specified in FIN-18. Requests for a retroactive allowance must include evidence of the service plan costs for the period requested.

22. *How is the allowance paid to me?*

- The allowance is paid on the second paycheck of each month. The allowance starts the month following the date of department approval.

23. *Is the allowance taxable?*

- Yes, the allowance is considered additional compensation and tax will be withheld for the amount from your paycheck.

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*24. Can the county take my personal cellular device if I use it for work, or look at my personal usage?*

- The county does not have an interest in reviewing employees' personal data on their own personal cellular devices. However, work records on personal cellular devices are subject to public records laws and other legal requirements that may require an employee to turn over those work records upon request.

This document will be updated as needed. Please contact your supervisor or department human resources office with questions.

If you have suggestions for additional questions to add, please send them to: [dcm.labor.relations@multco.us](mailto:dcm.labor.relations@multco.us)