



## **OP 01.15: CELLULAR COMMUNICATION DEVICES AND PLANS**

### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines to departments and employees regarding the acquisition and use of cellular communication devices and plans.

### **POLICY**

A university-provided cellular communication device will be provided to employees who have a documented, official university business need and receive approval via the process defined below.

### **DEFINITION**

“Cellular communication device” means any electronic device which meets all the following criteria:

- i. The device has a cellular communication capability;
- ii. The device requires an upfront or periodic charge or fee to utilize the cellular communications capability; and
- iii. The cellular communication capability that requires an upfront or periodic fee is activated.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

For faculty members or agents of MSU Extension Services, the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the Forestry and Wildlife Research Center, or the College of Veterinary Medicine, the director of the applicable unit or the director’s designee may grant eligibility to an employee at his or her discretion by signing a statement certifying the need or purpose for issuing the device. In order for any other MSU employee to obtain a device, an employee must have an official university business need for a cellular communication device and obtain approval from the President or his designee.

### **PROCEDURE**

To purchase a cellular communication device for a University employee, the employee’s department head is responsible for determining if an employee requires and is eligible for a university-provided cellular communication device/service as defined above. The department head, in conjunction with the employee, must follow the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services instructions for use of the current Statewide Master Cellular Voice and Data Services and Equipment Contract and choose the most cost-effective device and plan that will meet business requirements.

No employee to whom a cellular communication device has been assigned shall use the assigned device for personal use except in those cases where the personal use does not incur additional charges or fees as a result of the personal use. See additional restrictions below regarding the use of cellular phones.

Extension, Experiment Station, FWRC, and CVM Employees:

For faculty members or agents of MSU Extension Services, the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, the Forestry and Wildlife Research Center, or the College of Veterinary Medicine:

- The director or the director's designee may, at his or her discretion, assign or otherwise make available for usage one or more cellular communication devices to a faculty member or an agent of the unit under the director/designee's direct or indirect supervision after signing a statement certifying the need or purpose for issuing the device.
- A detailed billing of cellular services shall be obtained on a periodic basis and be reviewed by the director, or his designee, to audit usage and verify compliance.
- No state-appropriated funds shall be used to pay for the acquisition of a cellular communication device or service in one of these extension areas.

All Other University Employees:

For MSU employees not covered by one of the above areas, the following rules apply:

- The department head must complete a Cellular Communication Request form (<http://procurement.msstate.edu/procurement/forms/cellular-comm-request.pdf>) documenting the justification for the service. The form must be signed by the employee and approved by the department head, dean/director, vice president, and President or his designee. A copy of the approved form must be maintained in the employee's departmental personnel file for audit purposes. The original, approved Cellular Communication Request form must accompany the requisition to obtain a cellular device/service.
- The employee must sign a copy of the Cellular Communication Devices and Plans policy signifying concurrence with the policy's provisions. A copy of the signed policy must be maintained in the employee's departmental personnel file for audit purposes.
- If it is determined that an individual is required to have a cellular communication device, then the appropriate University unit will be required to pay the bill.
- For cellular phones, detailed billing must be applied to each cellular phone account to provide documentation for departmental personnel to verify telephone calls made to and from the device and for audit purposes. University-provided cellular phones shall be used for University business only. No personal use, incoming or outgoing, is permitted. Use of a University-provided cellular phone for personal purposes will result in appropriate disciplinary action and/or the loss of the use of the phone.
- The employee and the employee's supervisor must review and sign each monthly bill certifying that the billing is correct, that all calls were related to University business if

calling is a part of the device's plan, and that the device's plan is still appropriate for the employee's business needs. It is the department head's responsibility to ensure that all bills are reviewed, signed, and paid.

- The department is responsible for maintaining billing records for audit purposes.
- The employee and department head are responsible for monitoring cellular communication device usage and ensuring that all requirements are met.

## **STIPULATIONS**

- All billings are considered public records subject to disclosure under the Mississippi Public Records Act.
- Cellular communication devices are subject to state property inventory requirements as stated in Sections 29-9-1 through 29-9-21, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated. It is the department's responsibility to ensure that all equipment is properly recorded in the university's property control system. If for any reason the equipment is subsequently replaced, disconnected, or disposed of, it is the department's responsibility to notify Property Control.
- Employees will not be reimbursed for any charges incurred on personal cellular communication devices unless the employee's department head determines that the employee's use of the employee's personal device is the lowest-cost option to prevent business interruption during an employee's business-related international travel.
- Employees should be aware that cellular transmissions are not secure. Confidential information regarding official business should be transmitted in a secure manner.
- Due to documented safety concerns, the University does not support or condone the use of cellular telephones or other devices while an employee is driving. This restriction applies both to hand-held and hands-free phones/devices. If an employee needs to talk on the phone, text, or otherwise use a cellular device while in a vehicle, the employee should first pull off the road and stop.

## **REVIEW**

This OP will be reviewed every four years or sooner if needed by the Chief Information Officer, the Executive Director of Procurement & Contracts and the Vice President for Budget and Planning.

**REVIEWED BY:**

/s/ Steve Parrott 5/22/2023  
Chief Information Officer Date

/s/ Don Buffum 5/22/2023  
Executive Director of Procurement & Contracts Date

/s/ Don Zant 5/22/2023  
Vice President for Finance & Administration Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham 5/22/2023  
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness Date

/s/ Joan Lucas 5/22/2023  
General Counsel Date

**APPROVED:**

/s/ Mark E. Keenum 5/22/2023  
President Date