

**CITY OF BEAUMONT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Policy Number: 7.6

Subject: Cell Phone Policy

Effective Date: May 2, 2002

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Approved by: Kyle Hayes | 05/01/2021
City Manager | Date

Chris Catalina | 05/01/2021
Personnel Director | Date

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline responsibilities and provide procedures to follow regarding cell phone allowances, assignment, procurement, and use, as well as provide for payment of and reimbursement for cell phone service charges.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Allowance - A monthly allowance provided by the City to compensate employees for business-related use of their personal cell phones. This has become the City's preferred and routine practice regarding cell phones used by individual employees.
- B. Personal Use - any use of a city issued cell phone other than official use.
- C. Personal Use Charges - the monthly billing charges resulting from use that exceeds the rate plan minutes and personal long distance and roaming charges.

III. CELL PHONE ALLOWANCES

Employees whose job duties include the frequent need for a cell phone may receive extra compensation, in the form of a cell phone allowance, to cover business-related costs. Employees who are assigned city issued cell phones, which are covered in part IV of this policy, will transition to allowances, as soon as it becomes practical.

A. CELL PHONE ALLOWANCES - RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Accounting

- A. Shall maintain a master list of approved allowances.
- B. Enter allowances into the system upon receipt of proper documentation. This will include both an approved Cell Phone Request Form and evidence of the employee's cell phone service, such as a plan agreement or bill.

2. Employees

- A. Those receiving an allowance will keep a functioning cell phone available to accommodate expected and customary business use. The condition of the cell phone, battery, and state of charge should be such that the phone is fully functioning and available during business hours and while on call.
- B. During the work day, insure that all communications on such devices are kept to the briefest duration possible.
- C. Responsible for keeping personal communications to a minimum, so that such use does not detract from the employee's availability for completion of assigned duties.
- D. Responsible for following the safety rules outlined in this policy.
- E. Immediately notify the supervisor or manager, if cell phone service is discontinued.

3. Department Directors

- A. Responsible for determining appropriate need for cell phone service and completing and forwarding the Cell Phone Request Form to the City Manager. Relevant documentation should be attached to the Form.
- B. Responsible for conducting annual reviews of approved allowances to determine if such allowances continue to be justified.
- C. Responsible for ensuring that safety provisions of this policy are included in the department's training and orientation program.
- D. Advise Accounting when an employee no longer qualifies for an allowance.

B. CELL PHONE ALLOWANCES - PROCEDURES

- 1. The City will provide cell phone allowances upon approval of the City Manager, when wireless communication devices are needed by individual employees in order to improve productivity, enhance customer service to our citizens, and to enhance public safety services. The allowance schedule is designed to compensate employees whose regular and routine duties are predominantly conducted outside of their offices, as well as for those who more regularly use their phones for business-related activities when outside their offices.

2. Use of cell phones should be as a supplement to other means of communication, with normal land line phones being the preferred means of communication, when reasonably available.
3. The amount of the allowance will be based on expected business use.
 - A. Up to 450 minutes per month - \$30 per month.
 - B. Between 451 and 900 minutes per month - \$50 per month.
 - C. Over 900 minutes per month - \$70 per month.
4. Employees eligible for consideration of a cell phone allowance are those designated by the City Manager and Department Directors, including but not limited to:
 - A. Employees who are frequently in a vehicle, if the individual must conduct City business by telephone while in the field, and it can be shown that cost savings and customer service efficiency will be realized through use of such device.
 - B. Employees who have a critical need to maintain accessibility with other department managers, City management staff and public officials, in order to insure uninterrupted customer services and/or the integrity of the organization.
 - C. Public safety positions, to provide immediate and direct telephone communications with citizens, outside agencies cooperating in operations, or other resources entities outside of City government, and to provide for communications which may be inappropriate for mobile radios.
 - D. Employees who have responsibility for responding to public safety incidents in the field..
 - E. Employees who are required, as a condition of employment, to have a personal cell phone available for business-related use.

IV. CITY ISSUED CELL PHONES

As a general practice, the City will no longer issue cell phones. Exceptions may be granted by the City Manager and require his specific authorization. Examples of uses that have been approved include public health and security purposes, such as EMS, Narcotics undercover, and Bio-Terrorism.

A. CITY ISSUED CELL PHONES - RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Accounting

- A. Shall receive all monthly billing statements from the service provider. Payment of invoices shall be made by Accounting on a timely basis.
- B. A copy of the individual billing statement shall be forwarded to the appropriate department or departmental designee monthly.

2. Purchasing

- A. Responsible for the acquisition of cell phones and establishing rate contracts. Requests for cell service shall be in the form of a system requisition accompanied by a completed Cell Phone Request Form.
- B. Any changes to the cell phone service plan shall be made through the Purchasing Division.
- C. Providing the Accounting Division with new listings of cell phone service or billing changes.

3. Employees

- A. Responsible for the appropriate use and physical safekeeping of the city owned cell phone assigned to them. If a phone is lost, stolen or damaged during the employee's work hours, and the employee can show reasonable care was exercised, the employee will not be liable for its replacement or repair. Should a phone loss or damage occur after employee's work hours, employee shall be liable for cost of replacement or repair.
- B. Responsible for monitoring cell phone usage and reimbursing the City for all personal use charges on a monthly basis.
- C. Insuring that all communications on such device is kept to the briefest duration possible.
- D. Responsible for keeping personal communications to a minimum.
- E. Insuring that any personal use does not detract from the employee's availability for completion of assigned duties.

- F. Assist Department Director in determining appropriate minute requirements for city issued cell phones depending on anticipated usage.
- G. Follow the safety rules included in this policy.

4. Department Directors

- A. Responsible for determining appropriate need for cell phone service and completing and forwarding the Cell Phone Request Form to the City Manager for approval.
- B. Responsible for reviewing cell phone usage to determine appropriate rate plan and establishing a departmental system ensuring full reimbursement for personal use charges are made on a monthly basis.
- C. Ensure proper control and monitor cell phone use by his/her employees and assess appropriate disciplinary action for misuse or abuse.
- D. Responsible for conducting annual reviews of assigned cell phones to determine if such assignments continue to be justified.
- E. Maintain a list of city issued cell phone numbers assigned to the department's employees.
- F. Ensure that the safe usage policies are incorporated into departmental training programs.

B. CITY ISSUED CELL PHONES - PROCEDURES

- 1. Use of cell phones should be as a supplement to other means of communication, with normal land line phones being the preferred means of communication, when reasonably available.
- 2. City owned cell phones are intended for and expected to be used for City business. Occasional minimal personal usage is permitted, as long as the personal use is reasonable and prudent, and is reimbursed by the employee on a monthly basis.
- 3. Each employee who is assigned a cell phone is responsible for monitoring the usage on a monthly basis. Each employee shall maintain at least a one (1) year history of monthly billing statements.

4. Reimbursement to the City for personal use shall be calculated as follows:
 - A. Plans Billed at Per Minute Rate - reimbursement shall be at the established rate times the number of minutes used.
 - B. Plans Billed with Included Allowable Minutes
 1. If the total number of minutes used (both personal use and official use) do not exceed the allowable minutes in the plan, no reimbursement shall be due.
 2. If the total number of minutes used (both personal use and official use) exceed the allowable number of plan minutes and there is a charge for additional usage, that amount shall be fully reimbursed to the City.
 - C. All long distance and roaming charges assessed for personal use must be reimbursed at the rate charged.

V. CELL PHONE SAFETY AND USAGE RULES

1. All City employees, while on duty, are expected to drive with safety as the first consideration.
2. Recommendations for safe handling of vehicle-based calling from the cell phone include the following:
 - A. When driving, use of hands-free mode is recommended practice.
 - B. When driving, have frequently called numbers preprogrammed into the device or pull off the road to dial (or ask a passenger to dial).
 - C. Do not use the cell phone at all, if it is distracting your attention from hazardous road or traffic conditions.
 - D. Avoid multiple tasks when driving, such as trying to take notes while you are using a cell phone.
3. Any abuse which indicates a failure to comply with safety rules, an inordinate use of the cell phone, or failure to reimburse the City for personal cell phone use will be considered misconduct and neglect of duty, resulting in possible disciplinary action up to and including termination.
4. Employees should not use cell phones to discuss confidential or sensitive information, as cell phone conversations are not secured.

