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Department:
Public Works, Roads and Transport
North West Provincial Government
Republic of South Africa

Policy on ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL OF CELLULAR TELEPHONES AND DATA CARDS

NORTHWEST PROVINCE:
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS,ROADS AND TRANSPORT
SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

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NAME OF POLICY: ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL OF CELLULAR TELEPHONES AND DATA CARDS

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PREAMBLE

Whereas:

- Within the Department, certain managers and staff, due to their official position or the nature of their work, need to be regularly and consistently contactable for business purposes, to pursue departmental requirements and/or in the event of emergencies. The need to selectively provide cellular telephones as an effective business tool has therefore been identified.

Whereas:

- Cellular telephones should primarily be regarded as tools to enhance service delivery and at no time as an individual's right.

Therefore:

This policy is intended to regulate the administration and usage of cellular phones by employees of the Department and to provide and/or facilitate access to government administration together with matters related to service delivery.

1. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1.1 Cellular telephone: means "a standard mobile telephone supplied by registered service providers".

2.2 Department means : "Department of Public Works Roads and Transport in the North West Province".

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to articulate the departmental guidelines regarding the economical, efficient and effective acquisition, use, maintenance and reimbursement of cellular telephones for official purposes. And further to establish norms, procedures and guidelines to regulate the acquisition, use, management and disposal of cellular phones and data cards.

2.2 The diversity of activities and functions carried out in and outside the permanent working stations of the department necessitates the continued use of communication tools for official purposes by officials when communicating with their colleagues and/or with their clients from time to time. Service delivery standards are therefore improved with the easy access and the interest of the public seem to be reachable particularly where communication and access to employees is simplified.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 General

- (a) Every employee has a responsibility to be ethical and efficient in the official or private use of cellular telephones.
- (b) Every employee has a responsibility to be productive in the use of their work time.
- (c) Employees have the duty to observe care and caution when using issued cellular telephones.

- (d) Employees are to take whatever reasonable precautions necessary to ensure compliance with the law and their own safety when using a cellular telephone, (e.g. while driving in certain restricted areas, and obviating excessive exposure to the telephone rays).
- (e) The Department shall in no way be held responsible and accountable for any injuries and/or diseases that may arise or damage to or any loss of cellular telephones or for any fines that may arise from the unlawful use of cellular telephones by departmental employees.

3.2 Legislative frameworks

- A.** The Department of Public Service and Administration's guidelines contained in the minute dated 28 June 2002, provides for the utilization of cellular phones for official purposes and as such the instrument is regarded as a working too or facility which must be used as the most practical and economic communication instrument.
- B** The responsibility for the management of cellular telephones is assigned in terms of Section 38 (1)(b), (d), (l) and Section 38(2) of the PFMA, to the Accounting Officer of the Department.

Treasury Regulations 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 state:

.....10.1.1 - The Accounting Officer of an institution must take full responsibility and ensure that proper control systems exist for assets and that preventative mechanisms are in place to eliminate theft, losses, wastage and misuse.

.....10.1.2 - The Accounting Officer must ensure that processes (whether manual or electronic) and procedures are in place for the effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of the assets.

- C** Financial management delegations are also important in the determination of the responsibility of officials in terms of their prescribed protocol and seniority

3.3 Eligibility

The eligibility for the use of a departmental-issued cellular telephone shall be determined strictly by the requirements of the job function of the employee or manager, specifically where the employee is required to:

- (a) travel for business purposes on a regular basis.
- (b) contact clients, colleagues or management with regard to Department business, after hours.

3.4 The scope of the application of the policy

3.1.1 This policy shall be applicable to all officials of the department as follows:-

- a) The Executing Authority
- b) The Head of the Department
- c) The Chief Directors
- d) The Directors
- e) The Deputy Directors
- f) The Personal Assistants to the MEC and HOD
- g) Any other official recommended by his/her Programme Manager and approved by the HOD.

3.1.2 Terms and conditions

- a) The Department enters into standardised business call packages.
- b) The Department incurs 100% cost for the handset, subscription and official call costs, within the applicable limit grant above.
- c) The instrument shall remain the property of the Department however due to its perishable nature, the official shall not be obliged to return the tool upon termination of service or at any time the facility is withdrawn unless the HOD directs otherwise..
- d) Official cellular telephones shall be soft-locked on reaching the approved limit amount, which shall exclude VAT and all subscription fees.
- e) Under special circumstances, the prescribed limit may be increased for a specified period subject to prior written approval by the Head of Department.
- f) The employee who acquires his/her own instrument and incurs the installation costs and all related charges for the contract or prepaid package shall only be legible for airtime to the extent of the limit he/she qualifies for..
- g) The employee in this regard shall not be liable for all costs for private calls as against official calls and is therefore subject to the approved limit which shall be paid directly to the employee and upon submission of a claim in writing supported by proof of payment and the approval of the HOD from time to time attached to the a copy of a paid up invoice.
- h) Expenses shall only be reimbursed on submission of an original tax invoice or cash receipts indicating the relevant period paid for by the employee.

3.5 Categories

The Department shall consider the requirements for cellular telephones in accordance with the following categories:

(a) Category A: Senior Managers and Middle (Salary level 11 and above)

This category applies to middle and senior managers within the Department. The Department shall provide these employees with cellular telephones and cover the following maximum monthly call limits, excluding subscription and VAT, per employee, and there will be no excess above these limits as the phone call shall be soft-locked upon reaching the call limit as prescribed for a month.

RANK (designated levels including MEC support staff)	MAXIMUM AIRTIME. PERMONTH
Member of the Executive Council	Unlimited
Head of Department	R 2 000.00
Chief Director	R1 500.00
Director	R1 000.00
Deputy Director	R600.00
Support Staff to the MEC and other qualifying officials approved	R450.00

(b) Category B: Employees

- a. This category applies to employees (assistant manager and below) who, as a result of their normal duties, are required to be away from their head office station or district and need to be in telephonic contact for business purposes. The onus shall rest with the individual concerned to acquire an instrument and enter into a contract with a service provider of his/her choice.

- b. The Department shall reimburse qualifying employees in category **A** for the monthly airtime treated as official calls made to maximum amount of R450.00, should the employee choose to enter into, or already has, a contract with his/her service provider of own choice.
- c. Employees shall submit their original invoice and a flat rate amount shall be paid for calls made for that month as per allowable limit or flat rate and shall personally be reimbursed through a departmental payment system.
- d. Employees in this category need to apply through their programme managers for the approval of the Head of Department to participate **in category "B"**.
- e. Any employee **under category "A"** who prefers to use his/her own contract in terms of this category shall do so upon submitting written request to the HOD.
- f. Any employee whose request has been approved shall be entitled to claim back the
 - i. same amount he/she qualifies for and shall submit such a claim after settling his/her
 - ii. own private obligations with regard to the cell phone contract he/she is bound to.

(C) CATEGORY C: Pool Cellular Telephones

- a. This category applies to employees who are required to be away from their reporting offices, on an *ad hoc* basis, and where the Department needs to be in contact with the employee. Applications for the use of pool cellular telephones shall be submitted to the Director Supply Chain Management or his/her delegate.
- b. Pool Cellular phones shall remain the property of the Department and shall be managed in accordance with the departmental policy on assets. The Department shall purchase pre-paid airtime voucher and the use thereof must be accompanied by appropriate motivation. The relevant cost centre manager must budget for the cost of utilising pool telephones.
- c. Supply chain Management shall be responsible for the purchase and distribution to individuals using pool cellular phones and airtime of a limited amount of R500.00 for a period of a month shall be bought for that purpose such money shall be sourced from petty cash from SCM..
- d. Only airtime of R29.00 or R30 (or any equivalent) shall be distributed for use on a trip by only one pool cellular phone user unless otherwise it can be approved.

4. Qualifying Criteria

The use of cellular telephones, for official purposes, shall only be considered when:

- i. an employee has proved that a need exists to be in telephonic contact for business purposes during absence from his/her headquarters(office/station) .
- ii. the relevant cost centre manager/budget controller has provided proof that funds have been appropriated for this specific purpose.
- iii. approval has been granted by the Senior Executive Management Committee prior to the finalisation of the annual budget.
- iv. There is no other communication device in the relevant office.
- v. At least 10 working days in each month are spent travelling and away from the employee's office.

- vi. The employee is required to be available 24 hours 7 days a week on standby for any unexpected official instruction/call which shall not be an unreasonable proposal from the employer or its delegate.

5. Control Measures

The use of pool cellular telephones for official purposes shall only be considered when:

- i. proper approval procedures including a valid trip authority have been issued to safeguard cellular phones.
- ii. The employee possesses an appropriate handing-over certificate to show that he/she has been authorised to carry a pool cellular phone.
- iii. Supply Chain may retain excess cellular telephones for cellular pool purposes, provided that there is no contractual obligation and that the instrument remains the property of the Department by virtue of it being returned and the user has left the department either by resignation or any form of termination of the employment contract with the Department..

6. General Conditions

- i. Cellular telephone services requirements are subject to the availability of funds.
- ii. The Department shall not be liable for replacement of or repairs or insurance to privately owned cellular telephones and accessories.
- iii. Already Existing or all contracts which do not form part of this policy and which were applicable previously but were maintained by the Department shall not be continued excluding Category A, which shall be renewed.
- iv. Any such contracts which are currently running shall be left to expire and shall not be renewed.
- v. The Supply Chain shall build a stock of 10 pool cellular phones for the Head Office and stock of 5 pool cellular phones per district office .
- vi. The rest of the departmentally-owned telephones shall be disposed of on accordance with the Disposal Policy. The pool telephone requirements shall be monitored to ensure that the optimum level of stock is maintained.
- vii. Any Category A employee who leaves the Department for any reason shall not be forced to return the cellular phone to his/her employer unless he insists to return same or unless it is so required by the directive from the Head of Department..
- viii. Any damaged cellular phone shall be assessed and if need be and there are reasons that it will not be economically sensible to repair shall be disposed off as prescribed
- ix. An official cellular phone is always a state property and must be used effectively as a working tool
- x. Any employee who leaves the department and the cellular phone contract allocated to him/her shall inherit that contract and it shall be transferred/ceded into his/her name upon receipt of his/her written request to that effect.

7. Other available package Options

(a) International Roaming Package

- i. This facility shall be available to any official of the Department going overseas on an official trip.
- ii. This facility shall be applied for, in writing, two weeks (ten working days) prior to undertaking the trip and must be approved by the Head of Department.
- iii. Approval shall be at the sole discretion of the Head of Department.

(b) Data cards package

- i. Data cards will be made available to the designated officials from the level of Director and above.
- ii. The department will negotiate the contract on behalf of the individual officials with the least expensive contract offered.
- iii. The data card will be charged on a flat rate basis of 500 units per month (R200.00 per month is charged for 500 units).
- iv. The data card will also be soft locked automatically upon reaching 500 units per month.
- v. All data cards will be soft locked for voice calling
- VI. Costs for data cards will be additional to the approved airtime per individual per month

8. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

8.1 Usage

- When employees are in the office, all calls are encouraged to be made via internal fixed line telephone/PABX system insofar as possible, as the call costs are considerably lower than through cellular telephones, this is meant to reduce the abuse of airtime.
- Each official cellular phone instrument in use shall be counted during asset management assessment as state property upon the verification process by the Division: Utilities Management for compliance with this policy.
- The purpose of monitoring usage is to:
 - (a) Maximize cost savings
 - (b) Detect possible errors in carrier invoicing
 - (c) Ensure efficiency of service use
 - (d) Establish "true use" patterns for budget allocation purposes
 - (e) Ensure that calls designated as work/private are correctly recorded and accounted for
 - (f) Ensure that the employee is using the cellular telephone in accordance with the policy.
 - (g) Ensure that the instrument used has not been switched by an employee to a friend or member of his family as it remains a state property.

8.2 All state-authorised cellular phone users shall observe the following usage principles:

- (a) Employees are allowed to take reasonable efforts to become knowledgeable in the proper operation and use of the cellular telephones before commencing use of the equipment, such as accessing messages, sending messages and data functions.
- (b) Employees are allowed to familiarise themselves and use the various security devices available for the cellular telephones e.g. personal identification (PIN) code locks and access codes to avoid unauthorised use in the event of loss or theft.
- (c) Employees are to maintain the battery in a charged state with sufficient power to enable uninterrupted use during designated work hours.
- (d) Employees have an obligation to respond, in a timely manner, to any business messages sent.

- (e) Employees are required to comply with all relevant legislation in respect of transmitting or receiving information which could be regarded as being offensive, defamatory or contains material which could amount to sexual harassment, racial harassment, pornographic material or vilification.
- (f) Employees are required to report theft to the South African Police Services within 24 hours of the incident and obtain a case number.
- (g) Employees are required to report loss or theft within 2 hours of the incident to the relevant Service Provider in order to bar and blacklist the telephone.
- (h) Employees are required to report loss/theft/damage within 24 hours to the Division: Utilities Management.

9. Payments

Payments to authorised Category B employees shall be made on submission of the approved itinerary and paid on a supplementary PERSAL run.

10 Service Terminations

- 10.1 Where an employee leaves the employment of the Department, he/she may have the opportunity to take over the contract, (subject to vetting and approval by the Cellular Service Provider) and handset at book value. All costs charged for the transfer shall be for the employee's account if any, unless otherwise the service provider advises otherwise for termination or as per instruction of the HOD.
- 10.2 Where an employee decides to return the cellular telephone, it together with all accessories, including but not limited to the battery, charger and SIM card must be returned to the Division: Utilities Management and any outstanding accessory shall be recovered from the employee, before final salary due to him is paid.
- 10.3 The employee shall on his/her own volition provide the following information with regard to the cellular phone if so required:
 - (a) Single in-line memory (SIM) card
 - (b) Pin unblocking key (PUK) number
- 10.4 All cellular phones recovered or returned from employees, will be assigned to the pool or be Re-allocated to new employees who are authorised to obtain a cellular phone in terms of this policy, until the contract expires or otherwise directed by the HOD.

11. Suspensions

All outgoing call facilities shall be suspended/soft-locked when employees are placed on suspension for purposes of the investigation of any misconduct, and this measure is only introduced to properly manage airtime usage for official business of the state as the employer. .

12. Asset Management

All Departmentally-owned cellular telephones shall be procured, managed, recorded and disposed of in accordance with the departmental asset management policy.

13. Breakage/damage to instruments

Breakage/damage of instruments shall be subject to the requirements of the Treasury Regulations, Chapter 12. In particular, the following guidelines are highlighted:

- (a) The authorised cellular telephone user shall at all times take reasonable steps to safeguard the cellular phone from loss, damage or theft.
- (b) The employee shall also be liable for the purchase of a new SIM card in cases of loss, theft or damage if so found to have been grossly negligent. The Department shall only replace the SIM card if the damage was due to manufacturer's fault.
- (c) The responsibility to replace stolen or broken instruments shall only be borne by the Department, upon receipt of evidence proving that the incident did not occur as a result of gross negligence on the part of the user.
- (d) Stolen or damaged cellular telephones shall only be replaced once.
- (e) Damage cellular telephones shall only be repaired if economically justified through a cost benefit analysis.

14. RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

14.1 Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the duly delegated Director: Supply Chain Management.

14.2 Further responsibilities assigned to cost centre managers as outlined above.

14.3 In particular:

14.3.1 Payments to cellular service providers shall be processed by the Utilities Management Division within (30) thirty days, of receipt of the invoice.

14.3.2 The cost centre manager shall review the cost of cellular telephone calls for reasonableness, and ,to be included in the monthly budget of each programme for audit and accounting purposes.

14.4 All acts of gross negligence shall be regarded as acts of misconduct and that may include the employees' contribution to failure to take good care of the allocated state property by loosing such an instrument in an unlocked office or it being stolen in an office while the office remained unlocked.

14.5 any act of gross misconduct shall be subject to the institution of disciplinary proceedings or otherwise as may be directed by the HOD.

15. COMMENCEMENT OF THE POLICY

This policy is effective from the signature date below and will be reviewed after (24) twenty four months.

16. PERIOD OF REVIEW AND AMENDMENT TO THE POLICY


16.1 This policy shall be reviewed after every (2) two years from date of inception and

16.2 In the event of any need for amendments, such amendment shall be made and be affected to the policy after (12) twelve months of the application of this policy.

APPROVED ON



ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL



DATE