

## 25.99.09.R0.01      **Communication Allowances**

Revised August 28, 2023

Next Scheduled Review: August 28, 2028



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### **Procedure Summary**

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East Texas A&M University (University) recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may be supported and enhanced by the provision of cellular communication devices and services.

This procedure establishes the method for the University to make cellular communication devices and services available to employees. This procedure will formally outline the management and disbursement of cellular service allowances, device allowances, and university-owned cell phones.

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### **Procedures and Responsibilities**

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#### **1 COMMUNICATION ALLOWANCE**

- 1.1 The University recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may require the use of personal communication devices. Departments may elect to contribute monetarily to the employee's purchase and monthly business use of personal communication devices under the provisions of this procedure. Communication allowances may be provided through a Monthly Communication Allowance Plan (MCAP), which provides salary supplements for service plans.
- 1.2 A personal communication device acquired in accordance with the provisions of this procedure is considered to be the property of the employee and may be used in any way the employee deems appropriate. A communication allowance is considered taxable compensation subject to required tax withholdings. A communication allowance is not considered to be an entitlement and is not part of an employee's base salary. The communication allowance will be paid in equal installments as a salary supplement from departmental funds as authorized by the department head.
- 1.3 Department-level supervisors may request a communication allowance for employees in positions that require the use of personal communications devices and, therefore, qualify for the MCAP. Requests for a communication allowance to an employee will be considered only if access to the cellular device is directly linked to the employee's job duties and responsibilities.

- 1.4 The MCAP rate for cellular telephone plans (including provisions for the payment of related taxes and selected calling features) for approved employees shall not exceed \$30.00 per month for voice and \$60.00 per month for voice/data. Supervisors should determine what percentage of cellular usage is for business use, and from that establish an allowance up to the maximum approved rate. Communication allowances are not intended to be a full reimbursement for total out-of-pocket costs, given that the device and service are owned by the employee and used for both personal and business use.
- 1.5 Requests for variance above the maximum rate must be approved by the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Variances will normally be considered only for those who travel extensively.
- 1.6 To enroll in the communication allowance, the employee must submit (with the appropriate information and signatures) the Monthly Communication Allowance Enrollment form to the payroll office. Along with this form, the employee will need to submit their most recent service provider invoice to substantiate the monthly communication allowance. If a copy of the invoice is not received within five days subsequent to the submission of the Communication Allowance Enrollment form to the payroll department, the communication allowance request will be destroyed.
- 1.7 A communication allowance is only available to budgeted faculty & staff.
- 1.8 At the beginning of each fiscal year (September 1), each employee will need to re-apply to continue to receive the communication allowance. During this time each supervisor should review each application to determine if the amount is still appropriate, and that the applicant's position still qualifies for a communication allowance. Along with the Monthly Communication Allowance Enrollment Form, each applicant will need to submit a copy of their most recent service provider invoice to substantiate the monthly communication allowance.

## 2 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COMMUNICATION ALLOWANCES

- 2.1 The employee is responsible for the selection of and enrollment in a communication service plan. The employee should use a local phone prefix when possible. (A local prefix is one that can be dialed without incurring long distance charges from the employee's main headquarters office.)
- 2.2 An employee receiving a communication allowance must provide his/her department with the phone number of the communication device within five working days of activation.
- 2.3 The employee is personally responsible for complying with any contract entered into with a communication service provider including payment of all expenses incurred (including long distance, roaming fees, and taxes). In the event that an employee leaves the position that qualified for a communication allowance, he/she continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the communication service plan. The department head is responsible for submitting the request to terminate the allowance.

- 2.4 An employee receiving a communication allowance must notify his/her department head within five working days of the inactivation of communication service or of the loss or theft of the communication equipment. An employee receiving a communication allowance may not receive reimbursement from the University or any other component of The Texas A&M System for use of other communication equipment or services, except for expenses related to international business communication.

### 3 CELLULAR COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The University has elected not to provide an allowance toward the purchase of employee-owned cellular devices as provided in System Policy 25.99.09, Section 2.2(a).

### 4 UNIVERSITY-OWNED DEVICES

- 4.1 The University recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may require the use of university-owned cellular communication devices (phones or data cards). Requests for a university-owned cellular device must be made on the Request for University-Owned Device application form, approved by the division vice president as well as the Vice President for Finance and Administration, and submitted to Procurement Services.
- 4.2 If the communication device is owned by the member, the CEO or designee is additionally responsible for the following:
- 4.2.1 Informing an employee who is furnished a member-owned device that the employee has no expectation of privacy in the individual's use of the device, including information contained on the device.

### 5 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNIVERSITY-OWNED DEVICES

- 5.1 Ensuring that the cellular device is used only for official business (with the exception of incidental personal use), and that the device is not used for any purpose in violation of local, state or federal law.
- 5.2 Ensuring the physical protection of the device from damage and unauthorized use.
- 5.3 Ensuring that the device is returned to the University when it is no longer needed, or the employee terminates employment.
- 5.4 Employees utilizing a university-owned device may not request a communication allowance.

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## Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

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System Regulation [25.99.09 Communication Allowances](#)

System Policy [33.04 Use of System Resources](#)

System Regulation [33.04.02 Use of Telecommunication Service](#)

University Rule [33.04.02.R0.01 Use of Telecommunication Service](#)

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## **Revision History**

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Approved November 7, 2011

Revised August 17, 2017

Revised November 7, 2024 (University Name Update)

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## **Contact Offices**

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Payroll Office: (903) 886-5282

Financial Services: (903) 886-5053