

STANDARD OPERATING POLICY

PRIVATELY OWNED CELL PHONES AND ALLOWANCES & CITY ISSUED CELL PHONE USAGE

PURPOSE:

The City of Carthage recognizes the need for certain city personnel to own and use cell phones to complete and enhance their job performance. This policy establishes the procedures for cell phone authorization, allowance and usage for certain personnel. Criteria used in determining appropriate personnel include:

- The employee is a key staff member needed in the event of an emergency.
- Where the job function requires continuous accessibility beyond scheduled or normal working hours (i.e., on-call responsibilities for critical City services).
- The nature of the employee's work is critical to the operation of the department and immediate response is required.
- The anticipated level of business use is significant.
- Where the job function requires access to e-mail outside of the office or beyond normal scheduled working hours, and it is essential for the City that the employee has the ability to receive and send e-mail during those times.
- The related cost is justified when compared with alternative communication choices.

STATEMENT OF POLICY/PROCEDURE:

This policy is intended to provide for and regulate City cell phone usage by City employees. It also provides policies for the use of employee owned phones for City business where the City partially compensates the employee for such use. It is the policy of the City to acquire a cell phone for employees only when there is a reasonable need for the employee to have such a cell phone in order to facilitate communication with that employee, where such communication is frequently hampered by an absence of other suitable telecommunications devices.

Policy: Employees whose job duties include the frequent need for a cell phone may receive a stipend, in the form of a cell phone allowance to cover business-related costs on their personal cell phone. The City shall maintain a limited number of cell phones assigned to a specific department or piece of equipment as specified on the attached spreadsheet. These phones are intended to be used only during work hours and personal use of these phones is strictly prohibited. As a general rule, cell phones should not be selected as an alternative to other means of communication -- e.g., land-lines, pagers, and radio phones -- when such alternatives would provide adequate but less costly service to the City.

Cell Phone Allowance Eligibility: Employees eligible for a cell phone allowance generally include department heads, supervisors, and full-time employees whose job duties regularly require emergency call back, irregular work hours or other job related factors that require the employee to routinely utilize a cell phone to enhance their ability to perform their job duties. Department heads shall recommend which employees within their departments qualify for a cell phone allowance and complete an authorization request form (attached). The City Administrator shall give final approval on all cell phone allowances. Note that allowances must be covered by a department's budget.

Allowance Amount: The standard monthly cell phone allowance amount shall be \$20 (Level 1). However, based upon the recommendation of a department head and with approval of the City Administrator, a monthly allowance of \$35 (Level 2) may be provided to any employee whose necessary city business use of a cell phone justifies the need for a greater number of plan minutes or additions. No further reimbursement for cell phone costs is available to employees who receive an allowance.

Allowance Payment: The approved cell phone allowance will be paid monthly as part of the employee's paycheck and will be subject to all applicable payroll taxes. This allowance does not constitute an increase to

base pay, and will not be included in the calculation of percentage increases to base pay due to salary increases, promotions, etc.

Employee Responsibilities: The employee must retain an active cell phone contract as long as a cell phone allowance is in place. The employee must provide their department head and City Clerk with their current cell phone number and immediately notify both parties if the number changes. Employees receiving a cell phone allowance are expected to carry the cell phone on their person both on and off duty and respond when called for city business. Employees may choose the cell service provider and plan design of their choice. If available from the City's cell service provider, employees may be able to take advantage of discounts for their personal service plans if they utilize the same provider as the City. If, prior to the end of the cell phone contract, a personal decision by the employee, or employee misconduct, or misuse of the phone, results in the cell phone allowance being discontinued or the need to end or change the cell phone contract, the employee will bear the cost of any fees associated with that change or cancellation. For example, if an employee resigns, and no longer wants to retain the current cell phone contract for personal purposes, any cancellation charges will be the employee's responsibility. Use of the phone in any manner contrary to local, state, or federal laws will constitute misuse, and will result in immediate termination of the cell phone allowance.

Department Assigned Cell Phones: City owned cell phones assigned to departments and/or individuals may be used by multiple employees on an as-needed basis during the work day and are intended solely for city business use. Personal use of such phones for anything other than a personal emergency is discouraged and shall be limited as established by the Department Head and the City Administrator and may subject the employee to disciplinary action and require appropriate reimbursement to the City. Such phones may be assigned to an individual and may be taken home by employees.

City Cell Phone Usage: An employee who uses a City-supplied device or a City-supplied vehicle is prohibited from using a cell phone or similar device (unless it is hands-free) while driving, whether the business conducted is personal or City-related. This prohibition includes receiving or placing calls, text messaging, surfing the Internet, receiving or responding to email, checking for phone messages, or any other purpose related to employment; business; customers; vendors; volunteer activities; meetings; or civic responsibilities performed for or attended in the name of the City; or any other City or personally related activities not named here while driving, except in the event of an emergency. Therefore, (unless it is hands-free) employees are required to stop vehicles in a safe location so one can safely use a cell phone or similar device. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including employment termination. Use of City owned devices for personal business is discouraged.

Loss or Damage of City Cell Phones: In the event any phone or other related equipment is damaged in the course of business under reasonable circumstances, the item should be brought to the employee's supervisor for direction as to contacting the vendor for repair or replacement. Lost or stolen cell equipment shall be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor so the service may be cancelled; a timely police report should also be filed. The City Administrator must authorize the replacement request and provide an account to which the replacement will be charged. Employees may be financially responsible for the replacement if: 1. Equipment is lost or damaged while in the care of an employee as a result of the employee's negligence. 2. Equipment is not returned by an employee within the specified period of time or is damaged upon its return. 3. Equipment is damaged due to failure to adhere to maintenance or operational policies.

Personal Cell Phones: Employees are permitted to carry personal cell phones while at work for the City. While at work employees are expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cell phones as is expected for the use of City phones. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others. A reasonable standard the City encourages is to limit personal calls during work time to no more than one per day as needed. Employees are therefore asked to make any other personal calls on non-work time where possible and to ensure that friends and family members are aware of the City's policy. Flexibility will be provided in circumstances demanding immediate attention. Abuse of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal of the cell phone during work hours. The City will not be liable for the loss of personal cell phones brought into the workplace.

Use of Camera/Video Function: The use of the camera/video function on a City-provided cell phone is prohibited, unless authorized for business reasons. The use of the camera/video function on a personal cell phone is also prohibited during normal work hours unless authorized for business reasons.

Miscellaneous: Under no circumstances are employees allowed to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs. Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their phone while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions.

Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including employment termination.

APPROVAL

DATE: _____

**City of Carthage
Cell Phone Allowance Policy
And Authorization Request Form**

The City of Carthage, MO recognizes the need for certain personnel to own and use cell phones to complete and enhance their job performance. This policy establishes the procedures for cell phone authorization, reimbursement and use.

Once approved for a cell phone allowance, a full-time employee will receive a monthly allowance, paid bi-weekly, added to payroll as a taxable benefit.

The application form below must be completed and signed by the employee, then submitted to their department head. The supervisor will submit the application to the City Administrator's Office for approval. Please allow adequate time for completion of this process.

A cell phone is justified for these reasons (mark all that apply)

(How the cell phone will support the City's business and improve the employee's ability to do his/her job)

- This employee is a key staff member needed in the event of an emergency.
- Where the job function requires continuous accessibility beyond scheduled or normal working hours (i.e., on-call responsibilities for critical City services).
- The nature of this employee's work is critical to city operations and immediate response is required.
- The anticipated level of business use is significant.
- Where the job function requires access to e-mail outside of the office or beyond normal scheduled working hours, and it is essential for the City that the employee has the ability to receive and send e-mail during those times.
- The related cost is justified when compared with alternative communication choices.
- Other: _____

Print Name:	Do you currently own a cell phone?
Department:	Cell phone number: ()
Date:	Provider of cell phone:
Tier Level	Circle one 1 2

I have read the above information regarding the City of Carthage cell phone policy and had the opportunity to discuss any usage questions with my supervisor. I understand that my cell phone number may be published internally for official use by the City and that the main intent of a cell phone is for business. I also understand that I am financially responsible for any and all charges for this cell phone plan.

Employee signature
Approval signatures

Date

Department Head

Date

City Administrator

Date