Government of Saskatchewan
Cellular/Wireless Devices Policy and Guidelines

**POLICY**

The Government of Saskatchewan will provide cellular/wireless devices to employees, who by the nature of their work require access to telephone, email, and/or wireless data capabilities while away from a fixed location either permanently or frequently. For cellular phones, approval will be required by the Program Director, who will be responsible for determining the type of device and services required based on job function, usage, environment, cost, and budget. The exception will be for personal digital assistants (e.g. Blackberry, Palm, Pocket PC devices) which will require ADM approval.

Whenever frequency of use does not justify an individual assignment, government-owned cellular/wireless devices should be shared or pooled to minimize the number of personal assignments.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that cellular telephones and other mobile wireless devices for government business use are acquired, managed and used cost-effectively, safely and appropriately by departmental users.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Government of Saskatchewan employees that are directed to participate in the centralized procurement, use and administration of cellular/wireless devices and services as provided by SPM. It governs the use of mobile wireless devices including:

- Cellular telephones
- Devices with an integrated wireless communication capability (e.g. Blackberry, Palm, Pocket PC devices)

**DEFINITIONS**

**Cellular/Wireless Device** is any mobile communication device that captures or transfers information for transmission over a wireless service provider’s network. This includes but is not limited to cellular phones and personal digital assistants (e.g. Blackberry, Palm, Pocket PC devices). It does not include wireless LAN devices or systems, and 802.11x wireless systems also known as WI-FI hot spots.
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The issuance of cellular/wireless devices and services must be based on the job function and business need of the position. The level of user interaction dictates the best solution to be used. The following business conditions should be considered:

- Staff spending a considerable amount of time (20%-40% as a broad guideline) away from a normal office and whose job function requires two-way communication via telephone and/or access to e-mail, calendaring, or other electronic document communication.
- Staff working at multiple offices, required to be on call, on emergency response, or on other business that requires immediate access at all times.
- Staff working in situations that have the potential to become threatening to their personal safety.

ACQUISITION

The acquisition of all cellular/wireless devices must follow the applicable purchasing procedures.

The purchase or upgrade of a cellular/wireless device must have the prior approval of the Director. The purchase or upgrade of a personal digital assistant (e.g. Blackberry, Palm, and Pocket PC devices) must have prior approval from the ADM. This ensures that the business requirement and funding are in place to purchase the device and pay for the monthly service charges.

All devices should be purchased through the authorized vendor(s) as per the annual standing offer administered by SPM. The standing offer provides discounted pricing for cell phones/wireless devices and accessories.

All devices must be activated on the most economical service plan that meets the employee’s planned business needs. Typically for cellular, this is the Provincial Government Anytime Professional Plan negotiated by SPM, Telecommunications Branch. SPM, on behalf of government, has negotiated a cellular services contract with SaskTel Mobility, which also includes a 20% discount off Wireless Data and Blackberry Service Plans.

Each department, through the Telephone Coordinator, is required to maintain a detailed list of all cellular/wireless devices assigned. The list should include information such as the employee’s name, division/branch/work unit, cellular/wireless device phone number, manufacturer and model number. An electronic copy of the list is to be provided to SPM, Telecommunications Branch for the purposes of compiling a government wide report.
**ACCEPTABLE USE**

Employees are reminded of the Government’s policy for the use of government-owned cellular/wireless devices in *PS 1103 Information Technology Acceptable Usage Policy* contained within the Saskatchewan Public Service Human Resource Manual. The policy provides, in part:

- Cellular/wireless devices are part of the Government’s information technology infrastructure and should only be used to conduct government business.
- Employees are required to reimburse the Government for costs associated with personal incidental use (i.e. personal long-distance calls made on an exceptional basis) and provide reimbursement for actual charges plus PST. Occasional personal use for local calls will not normally result in additional costs to the Government; therefore, calculating a prorated cost is not required unless there is an additional cost.
- Personal incidental use that becomes an imposition on others or burdens systems is no longer incidental, but unacceptable and is not permitted. As there are costs related to administering employee reimbursements, personal usage must be incidental.
- Other government policies, i.e. conflict of interest, corrective discipline, etc, also apply when employees use the Government’s Information Technology infrastructure.

The re-imbursement process for personal use is outlined in the government’s FAM (Financial Administration Manual).

In addition,

- Cellular/wireless devices should only be used for calls whenever alternate cost effective telecommunications devices are not readily available. Government desk phones or calling cards should be considered prior to using cellular/wireless devices for calls, particularly long distance calls.
- Employees are encouraged to use government provided cellular/wireless devices where appropriate. Employees will not be reimbursed the cost of using a personal device for official government business without the advance written authorization of their Director or designate(s).

**INAPPROPRIATE USE**

- Use of government cellular/wireless devices is not permitted for private commercial or consulting purposes (e.g. running a personal business or consulting on the side).
- Cellular/wireless devices must not be used to place inappropriate calls including obscene, harassing, or defamatory calls. Cellular/wireless devices shall not be used for illegal purposes.
- Cellular/wireless devices with camera functionality must never be used to take pictures of the following non-exhaustive list of prohibited situations:
  - Other people without their clear approval, particularly in locker rooms and washrooms;
  - Copyright protected documents, magazines, or other printed material;
  - Sensitive, protected, or classified documents, floor plans, designs, etc.
RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee

Authorized users have an obligation to use cellular/wireless devices in an informed, safe and responsible manner. Users are also responsible for complying with the following provisions of this policy:

- Use resources prudently and cost effectively.
- Comply with all local, provincial and federal laws that are applicable in the area in which they are using the device.
- Use proper cell phone etiquette and courtesies (see Appendix A – Cell Phone Etiquette).
- Verify monthly invoices, track personal use and reimburse the department as applicable.
- Maintain the security and safekeeping of the cellular/wireless device assigned to them and protect it against loss, theft and unauthorized use.
- Immediately report the loss or theft of a cellular/wireless device under their responsibility, to their Director or designate(s) who will arrange to discontinue the service.
- Take necessary measures to ensure the integrity and security of Departmental and government information while using cellular/wireless devices for telephone conversation, email or data transmission, and report security incidents to their Director or designate(s).
- Return the cellular/wireless device to their Director or designate(s) when it is no longer required to carry out their work assignments.

Director or Designate Responsibility

Directors or designates are responsible and accountable for the acquisition, safeguarding and effective use of government assets including cellular/wireless devices. They are also responsible to inform users of this policy. Each Director or Designate must:

- Authorize users to obtain and use cellular/wireless devices and services on the basis of their business functions as outlined in the Needs Assessment section of this policy.
- Inform authorized users of their obligations to abide by this policy and other terms and conditions of access.
- Promote best practices; discourage inappropriate use and act promptly to correct inappropriate use.
- Monitor the utilization of cellular/wireless devices within their area of responsibility to ensure those resources are used appropriately, cost effectively and that the user requirements are still valid.
- Act on cost saving recommendations identified by SaskTel Mobility through the annual cellular optimization study. Annually, SaskTel Mobility shares the results and recommendations of the study with the departmental Telephone Coordinator(s).
- Ensure the return of cellular/wireless devices from users who no longer require them to carry out their work assignments or due to termination of employment.
- Arrange the deactivation of cellular/wireless devices when no longer required to avoid future payment of services.
DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Employees should be aware that disciplinary action may be taken where there is evidence of misuse or failure to exercise due diligence while using cellular/wireless devices. Disciplinary action can range from an oral or written reprimand to suspension or termination of employment depending on the severity of the infraction. Employees will be accountable for any fines or legal action resulting from inappropriate use of cellular/wireless devices.

USE OF WIRELESS DEVICES WHILE DRIVING

Employees that drive vehicles or operate other potentially hazardous equipment are responsible for operating it in a safe manner. For the safety of employees and others, refrain from using cellular/wireless devices in a hand-held position to the extent possible while operating vehicles and other equipment. If the employee needs to make or receive a phone call while driving a vehicle, it is highly recommended the employee make sure the vehicle is stopped and parked in a proper parking area before using a cellular/wireless device. Exceptions to this rule are when an employee is faced with an emergency situation such as a traffic accident, car trouble or if their personal safety is in jeopardy. Employees should use hands-free accessories to maximize their attentiveness while driving.
Appendix A – Cell Phone Etiquette

It is important for Government of Saskatchewan employees to follow good cell phone etiquette at all times, particularly when representing the department or government at client meetings, conferences, etc. Features such as caller ID and voice mail can be useful tools when it is not appropriate to answer calls. The following guidelines should be used when carrying a cellular telephone or other wireless device, but the underlying theme is to use common sense, respect other people’s space, and be courteous.

**General:**

Keep all cellular phone calls brief and to the point.

Advise the person you are calling that you are using a cell phone so they can anticipate miscellaneous background noise and sudden disconnects.

Be considerate and aware of the proximity of other people when you are on a cell phone in public.

**Meetings:**

When in a meeting, turn the cell phone off unless it is absolutely essential for you to be available to take a call. If this is the case, set the device to vibrate mode and keep it on your belt, in a pocket or purse. A vibrating phone on a meeting room table is as disruptive as if it were ringing. It is also good practice and respectful to the meeting organizer to advise them that you may need to take an important call during the meeting.

If a call comes in, check the caller ID to determine if the call is the urgent call you were expecting. If not, select the disregard function on the phone or let it vibrate until it goes to voice mail. If it is the call you were expecting, excuse yourself from the meeting and take the call outside the room. Make the call as short as possible and return to the meeting.

**While Speaking with Someone:**

If you receive a call while speaking with someone, keep the call as short as possible and preferably ask the caller if you can call them back later. If the call is important, ask the caller to hold for a moment, give your apologies to the person you are speaking with, and tell them that you must take the call and will get back to them later. Continuing with a call while in the midst of a discussion with a friend or colleague conveys the feeling that they are less important than the caller and is offensive.
**In public:**

When traveling on public transportation, when dining at a restaurant, or in any situation where people are a captive audience to your phone conversation, only use the cell phone if absolutely necessary. It becomes very intrusive especially if, as people often do, you talk louder than on a normal telephone.

Never discuss sensitive departmental or government business on a cell phone, especially when in public. Discussions related to specific individuals are also bad practice since you never know who may be listening.

Always turn off your cell phone when in theaters, libraries, museums, hospitals, doctor or dentist waiting rooms, places of worship, auditoriums, or other enclosed public places where the function will be inappropriately disrupted if the phone rings or if you conduct a conversation.

**Ring tones:**

To avoid disruption of the work of others, Government of Saskatchewan employees should refrain from using other than the standard non-musical ring tones that come with the device and should keep the ring volume as low as possible. The download of ring tones and other personal use applications (e.g. screen images or games) from websites is prohibited, as is the allocation of such costs to departmental accounts.

If possible, vibrate mode should be used as often as practical.