

Procedure Name: Wireless Communication Devices and Cellular Phones
Responsible Department: Financial and Accounting Services
Approval Authority: VP, Finance and Administration

Date of Original Procedure: August 20, 2008
Last Updated: January 17, 2023
Contact: Jonathan Williams, Director of Disbursements

Reason for Procedure:

[OPB Policy Memorandum No.4](#) requires each state agency, including institutions, to manage and minimize the costs of using telecommunications equipment and services. It is the responsibility of Georgia State University and each of its budgetary units to effectively use communication services at the lowest possible cost.

Procedure Statement:

University departments have the following options for providing employees with wireless communication devices and related services. Utilization of these options must be for the **benefit of the University**, rather than the **convenience of the employee**.

Option 1: University Provided Devices and Service

The University may purchase devices and related usage/service plans for employees in the following circumstances:

- Emergency personnel responsible for protecting the physical safety of the general public or responding to public or environmental emergencies, or
- Personnel responsible for responding to critical system failures or services disruptions, or
- On-call personnel, or
- Personnel expected to conduct a **significant** amount of business while commuting, traveling, or moving between appointments or who cannot adequately meet communication needs with other available means.

Approval to purchase these devices rests within the unit's regular purchasing processes. These devices and their related service plans are primarily for official business purposes. Personal use should be infrequent and limited to emergencies or extenuating circumstances. For all purchases included in Option 1, the University owns the device and departments must:

- Demonstrate and document the need and justification for such equipment and services.

- Maintain a monthly review of service bills and identify any personal use.
- Conduct an annual inventory of all University-purchased devices and related service plans.
- Conduct an annual review of assigned devices and related service plans to ensure the devices and service plans align with the job requirements of the employee using the device.
- Maintain records of annual reviews and inventories and make all related documentation available for inspection by internal and external auditors, and University administrative units.
- Coordinate with Surplus Property for devices which are no longer needed.

The University will not enter into a usage/service contract for personally owned devices. Contact [Purchasing](#) for guidance on equipment/device purchases.

Option 2: Reimbursement for Business Usage on Personal Devices

It is recommended that faculty and staff with regular business needs be provided a university-owned device and those with infrequent business use of a personal device submit for reimbursement when necessary.

Employees may not be reimbursed for the following expenses:

- Personal calls;
- Home Internet service (e.g., DSL expenses, modem expenses, etc.); and
- Unrelated Wireless Device communication expenses (e.g., service, repair, installation, insurance, or equipment charges).

The acceptable method of reimbursement is use of a formula to determine the per unit of usage charge for calculating the reimbursement rate for business related communications.

- Business related communications made using minutes or measured service within a user's pre-paid/unlimited service plan shall not be reimbursed.
- Business related communications made using minutes or measured service in **excess** of the pre-paid service plan.
 - When a business-related communication occurs over and above the pre-paid service plan's limit, GSU will reimburse at the actually accrued per minute charge billed by the service provider. GSU will reimburse for roaming, long-distance, or other applicable charges for business-related purposes.
 - An employee may be reimbursed for personal calls made using minutes or measured service in excess of the pre-paid plan **but only to the extent required to offset business-related communication minutes or measure service within a user's pre-paid service plan.**

Submit reimbursements to Accounts Payable on a PantherMart Payment Request Form for processing. Each department should review their level of requests for reimbursements to determine if purchasing a university-owned device is justified and/or more efficient.

Human Resources Policy: [Section 1004 Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage](#)

These guidelines apply to any device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, browse the internet, downloads data, and allows for the reading of and responding to email.

1004.1 Use of Cell Phone/Electronic Device for University Business

Any employee who uses a cell phone/electronic device for University business should not use cell phone or any other electronic device while driving. This includes but not limited to receiving and placing calls, text messaging, surfing the internet, receiving and responding to email, and checking for phone messages.

1004.2 Limitation of Cell Phone/Electronic Device

The use of all University cell phones/electronic devices should be limited to official University business only. Using University cell phones/electronic devices for personal use is a violation of University policy and may result in disciplinary action. While driving, if possible, the employee should stop his/her vehicle in a safe location, so that he/she can safely use the cell phone/electronic device. Employees may not use University cell phones/electronic devices for personal communications with the intention of repaying the University at a later date.

Hands-Free Georgia Law (HB673)

Effective July 1, 2018, all drivers operating a motor vehicle on any highway of this state are prohibited from:

- Holding or supporting, with any part of the body, a wireless telecommunications device or stand-alone electronic device.
- Writing, sending or reading any text-based communication, including a text message, instant message, e-mail, or internet data.
- Watching, recording, or broadcasting a video or movie.

For more information on the law and FAQ, visit <http://www.headsupgeorgia.com/handsfree-law/>.

Right to Monitor Communications and Open Records

Georgia State University reserves the right to investigate, retrieve and read any communication or data composed, transmitted or received through voice services, online connections and/or stored on its servers and/or property, without further notice to employees, to the maximum extent permissible by law. Express notice to employees stating that there is no right to privacy for any use of University telecommunications equipment and services should be included in the approval form for University-provided devices and services. Information stored on wireless communication devices which is prepared and maintained or received in the performance of a service or function by or on behalf of the University is public information and may be subject to disclosure under the Georgia Open Records Act.