



County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 974-1101
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

July 20, 2011

To: Audit Committee
From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

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Fifth District

PROPOSED COUNTY CELL PHONE AND DATA CARD USAGE POLICY

On January 4, 2011, on motion by Mayor Antonovich and Supervisor Molina, the Board of Supervisors directed our Office, Auditor-Controller and the Director of Internal Services, to develop and implement a uniform Countywide policy for adherence by all County departments to ensure that proper controls are in place for the issuance and use of County cellular phones and data cards.

The attached proposed County Cell Phone and Data Card Usage Policy is the product of the workgroup consisting of the three departments noted above, and also reflects additional input provided by other County departments. It is hereby presented for your consideration and subsequent recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. As set forth in the attached, we are recommending a countywide policy that provides uniform rules across all County departments, regarding the acquisition and usage of County cellular telephones and other wireless data devices.

When this is scheduled for an Audit Committee meeting, my staff will be available to provide a presentation and answer any questions. Please contact James Hazlett of my Office at (213) 974-1148; or at jhazlett@ceo.lacounty.gov if you have any questions at this time.

WTF:ES:MKZ
FC:JH:ib

Attachment

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller
Director of Internal Services

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Los Angeles County
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY MANUAL

ATTACHMENT

Policy #:	Title:	Effective Date:
0.000	County Cellular Telephone and Data Card Policy	00/00/00

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide uniform rules across all County departments, regarding the acquisition and usage of County cellular telephones and other wireless data devices. The Policy addresses who may be issued a County cellular telephone or other wireless data device, when it may be used, management responsibilities to monitor and check usage and cost, and reimbursement for personal use. This policy applies to both handheld portable and vehicle-installed units.

REFERENCE

January 4, 2011 Board Order 3
January 6, 2011 Chief Executive Office Memo "Cell Phone and Data Card Use"
February 4, 2011 Chief Executive Office Memo "Cellular Phone Usage – Status Report"
County Fiscal Manual Section 4.7.0

POLICY

Cellular telephones and other wireless data devices (such as pagers, mobile hot spots, air cards, etc.) issued and paid for by the County must be assigned based on operational need and not employee level. The department head or designee must limit assignment of such devices to circumstances in which the employee's use of a non-cellular phone or other form of communication is inadequate to meet departmental needs. Examples of such circumstances include a frequent urgent need to contact the employee, a finding that employees can more efficiently and productively complete their duties with use of a cell phone or other wireless data device, or when an employee's personal safety may be at risk. Use of cellular telephones and other wireless data devices is to be minimized, and conventional communication means are to be used when practical. Department management must follow the internal controls required by this policy to monitor and regulate usage and cost associated with cellular telephones and other wireless data devices. Personal use by employees of County-owned devices may require reimbursement to the County.

Applicability

This policy applies to users of County-provided cellular telephones and other wireless data devices.

Definition(s)

Cellular telephones are defined as any hand-held, portable, or vehicle-mounted, two-way communication device in which there is a per-minute, per message, and/or a monthly service charge for usage.

Other wireless data devices are defined as any portable data device (i.e. data card, air card, mobile hot spot) in a laptop computer or free standing that provides two-way data communication in which there is a per-minute and/or a monthly service charge for usage.

Internal Controls

The requirements for departmental internal controls over the use of cellular telephones and other wireless data devices are as follows:

Selection and Approval

- Cellular telephone and other wireless data device costs are to be monitored and controlled as part of each department's operating budget.
- Cellular telephones and other wireless data devices and services are to be acquired at rates available through County master agreements negotiated by the Internal Services Department.
- Departments must choose the most cost-effective pricing plan for the department and the employee. All unnecessary features (such as international calling, and downloads of recreational programs) must be disabled to prevent accidental charges.
- Cellular telephone and other wireless data device assignments are to be individually justified and approved by an appropriate level of departmental management.
- Multiple user, pool telephones or other wireless data devices must be controlled by a specific individual assigned responsibility for controlling the use of each device, through a) logging usage by each individual with access to the device and/or b) utilization of electronic coding of user and usage such as in "Call Accounting" programs, when available from the service provider.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Department management must, at least annually, reevaluate individual County cellular telephone assignments to ensure continued need. This evaluation must also include a review of the individual employee's pricing plan to ensure the most cost-effective plan continues to be used. For example, the department should not pay for a plan that offers 2000 anytime minutes a month if the employee does not use more than 500 minutes a month on County business, and vice versa.

- A detailed departmental cellular telephone and other wireless data device inventory must be maintained at all times for each device which includes at a minimum: identification code (e.g. serial number), state of activation, service provider, account number, user assignment, user identification number, and assignment location.
- Copies of bills showing charges for each individual device must be distributed through immediate supervisors to users within one week of receipt.
- Individual users must check and verify that the charges are correct and identify any personal use. Employees must reimburse the County for the cost of all reimbursable personal use, if required, within 30 days of bill receipt.
- Departments must ensure bills are checked by users. Management must review verified bills to ensure that usage was appropriate and the cost of personal use is being reimbursed, if required. The appropriate level of management must review all bills over a normal usage amount as determined by the department head.
- Inappropriate use patterns that may indicate misuse of the device by unauthorized individuals ("cloning" or stolen numbers) must be immediately reported by the department to the service provider.
- Security measures available through service providers must be considered as a means of additional protection. For example, electronic coding of the device to prevent use unless a personal identification number (PIN) or password is entered by the user.
- Departments must establish internal controls consistent with this Policy to ensure that departmental/County policies for use of cellular telephones and other wireless data devices are followed.

Departments may maintain a reasonable number of unassigned activated cellular telephones and other wireless data devices for use only in emergencies with responsible person(s) assigned and appropriate security controls in place to prevent misuse.

Reimbursement Policy

Reimbursement requirements by employees for personal use of cellular telephones and other wireless data devices are as follows:

- Flat Rate Plans - Flat rate plans charge a specified per-minute rate for all calls made from a cellular telephone. Per minute charges begin with the first minute used. Employees will reimburse the County for each personal call at the per-minute rate specified in the cellular service agreement.
- Anytime Minutes Plans - Anytime Minutes Plans provide cellular telephone users with a specified number of minutes for a fixed monthly fee. The cellular service provider bills each minute used above the specific number of minutes in the Plan at a predetermined, per-minute rate. Under this Plan, employees are required to

reimburse the County for personal calls only if the employee used more than the specified number of minutes in the Plan. If the employee used more than the specified number of minutes in the Plan, the employee must reimburse the County for the lesser of 1) all personal calls or 2) all additional minutes at the plan overage rate.

- Shared/Pooled Plans – For departments using shared/pooled minute plans, usage must be routinely analyzed to determine the appropriate number of minutes for each department’s plan. If departments underutilize or exceed plan minutes, then they overpay for the plan. The nature of these plans makes it difficult to establish equitable reimbursement guidelines for excess usage. As such, departments must ensure they actively monitor individual usage under these plans.
- Data Plans - Data plans provide users with a specified amount of data for a fixed monthly fee. The data service provider bills usage above the specific amount of data in the Plan at a predetermined, per-byte rate. Under this Plan, employees are required to reimburse the County for personal use only if the employee used more than the specified amount of data in the Plan due to personal use. If the employee used more than the specified amount in the Plan, the employee must reimburse the County for all personal use, if personal use can be substantiated.

Note: If a Plan includes roaming charges, they are generally in addition to the base rate. Departments must ensure that all roaming charges related to a user’s personal use are identified and reimbursed by the employee.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Chief Executive Office

Auditor-Controller

Internal Services Department

DATE ISSUED/SUNSET DATE

Issue Date: March XX, XXXX

Sunset Date: March XX, XXXX