

**Policy Name:** Cell Phone Use  
**Section:** 3000 Operational: 3100 Administrative  
**Policy Number:** 0000

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**Purpose:** To outline and regulate cell phone, text messaging and data use by District employees on: 1) cell phones provided by the District; and 2) employee-owned cell phones used for District business.

**Reference:** This policy supersedes 1) "Employee Responsibilities/Section b. Cellular Telephones" in the District's Personnel Policy Manual adopted 1/20/11 by Resolution 2011-01; and 2) "Cell Phone Use & Allowance" policy approved by motion at 2/21/13 board meeting.

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**Definition:**

The term "routine" or "routinely" as used in this policy is defined as either: 1) continual or repeated use on an almost daily basis for the purpose of work communications, or 2) a form of communication that has become common and expected of the employee in the course of his or her work.

**Policy:**

The Park District recognizes that cell phones are an important and necessary tool in the performance of certain employees' job duties, and are permitted when necessary for conducting job responsibilities. Cell phones provide opportunities for voice communication, text messaging, and access to data via the internet.

It is preferred that employees use a District-provided cellular device (phone) for District business. The use of private cell phones for District business is discouraged because a District-issued cell phone allows standardization of equipment, consistent review of billing statements and easier compliance with the WA State Public Records Act and record retention requirements. Tracking of private cell phone records is more difficult.

The use of cell phones whether owned by the employee or the District, creates a record of the number dialed or the number of the caller or both. When the cell phone is used for District business, this creates a public record subject to possible disclosure under the Public Records Act. Similarly, any message relating to District business that is left on a cell phone, whether owned by the employee or the District, may be a public record subject to possible disclosure.

Cost effective decisions will be made regarding cell phone use and the cell phone plan. For example, if regular phone service is available, then it should be utilized in most instances.

Use of the cell phone in any manner contrary to local, state or federal laws will constitute misuse and may result in the immediate termination of the use of a District-provided cell phone, disciplinary action, or both.

Cell phones will not be used illegally while driving, and should not be used during a time when it would create a hazardous work environment, or when it would be disruptive to the user or any person working with or near the user. Any traffic fines or costs associated with using a cell phone while driving, regardless of the ownership of the vehicle being driven, will be the responsibility of the employee.

Text Messaging

- Text messaging about Park District business creates a public record that is subject to WA State law public disclosure and retention requirements, regardless of whether a District or personal cell phone is used.
- Text messaging is permitted on District cell phones when: 1) The use of it is needed on a routine basis and is necessary to perform job duties; 2) It is approved by the employee's division head; 3) The phone is enrolled in the District's text message back-up service.

- Routine text messaging to conduct District business is not permitted on personal cell phones, since this creates public records the District cannot effectively manage in accordance with State law.
- Text messages must be professional and business-like with no jokes, derogatory, political or discriminatory remarks.
- Employees who text to communicate must be aware that anything stated in a text message could be used in litigation.

### Cell Phone Options

There are two options for using cell phones to conduct District business: 1) Use of District cell phone with expenses covered by the District; 2) Use of personal phone at own expense for voice communications only. The District does not provide allowances to employees for using their personal cell phones for work related business.

### Use of District Cell Phones

District Cell phones should not be used for personal use, except for necessary work-related situations such as unanticipated overtime or family emergencies. Calls or text messages of this nature should be infrequent in number and brief in duration.

Employees must report non-work related, local and long-distance personal cell phone charges to the District and reimburse the District at the per-minute rate the District pays for minutes billable to the phone in excess of the free-time minutes.

Individual departments and department heads are responsible for identifying employees who hold positions that include the need for a cell phone. Each department is strongly encouraged to review whether a cellular device is necessary, and to select alternative means of communication (e.g. landlines, pagers, and mobile radios) when such alternatives would provide adequate and a less costly service to the District. Departments may have procedures that are more limiting than the District cell phone policy.

The department head is responsible for overseeing employee cell phone needs and assessing each employee's continued need of a cell phone for business purposes. The need for a cell phone allowance should be reviewed annually, to determine if existing cell phone allowances should be continued as-is, changed, or discontinued.

Other items related to District cell phone use include:

- Data use and text messaging must be approved by the District as outlined above.
- If data use and text messaging is not needed, these features will be blocked on the phone.
- If authorized to use a data plan, extra security measures should be taken (e.g. password protection).
- Any apps downloaded onto a District cell phone should be for District use only, and must be approved by the District.
- Employee is responsible for the care and protection of the cell phone.
- A lost, stolen, or broken cell phone must be immediately reported to the District. The decision of who will bear the cost (employee or District) to replace or repair it will be determined by the Executive Director or designee.
- Employee is to notify immediate supervisor if the need for a District phone is no longer necessary.
- Any phone that is replaced with another phone must be enrolled in the District's text messaging back-up service if text messaging has been approved.
- District phones will be turned into District by employee upon departure from employment.

If approved for a District cell phone, the employee must sign a cell phone agreement with the District. The determination of which District-owned phone and plan is appropriate for each employee will be made by the Executive Director or his/her designee. Cell phone related costs including text back-up will be paid by the division the employee is working for.

## Use of Personal Cell Phone

Personal cell phones used to conduct District business will be for voice communications.

- Personal cell phones are not to be used for work-related text messaging unless occasional and when a transitory record (i.e. temporary text messages with short term value that are not necessary for documenting District business or operations).
- Any work related text messages are public records and must be retained in accordance with the WA State retention schedule and must be made available to the District by the employee upon request.