



**Cellular and Landline Telephone Services Policy for  
Employees of the House of Assembly Service,  
Caucus Offices and Statutory Offices**

**Revised July 2016**

## **Table of Contents**

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**1.0 Approval**

**2.0 Purpose**

**3.0 General**

**4.0 Process**

**4.1 Applicability**

**4.2 Definitions**

**4.3 Restrictions**

**4.4 Cellular Phones**

**4.5 Landline Phones**

**4.6 Administrative Matters**

## **1.0 Approval**

Under the authority of subparagraph 20(6)(b)(ii) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* (the Act), the House of Assembly Management Commission establishes this policy respecting services for cellular phones and landline phones for employees of the House of Assembly Service, Caucus Offices and Statutory Offices as defined by the Act.

## **2.0 Purpose**

To provide direction to employees of the House of Assembly Service, Caucus Offices and Statutory Offices regarding cellular phone and landline long distance services.

## **3.0 General**

The policy provides processes for the acquisition of cellular phones, defines acceptable incidental usage of cellular phones; provides guidelines for accessing the need for cellular phones and the related approval process; outlines the responsibilities for landline phone usage and processes for review of all phone bills.

## **4.0 Process**

### **4.1 Applicability**

This policy applies to all cellular phone and landline long distance services which are paid by the Legislature for employees of the House of Assembly Service, Caucus Offices, and Statutory Offices.

### **4.2 Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

“Cellular phone” refers to analog and digital cellular phones, as well as blackberry units and similar electronic devices that provide data and/or phone communications.

“Landline phone” refers to the office phone of the user.

“Users” mean the employees of the House of Assembly Service, Caucus Offices and Statutory Offices.

“Responsible individual” means the individual designated by the Clerk of the House of Assembly or Statutory Officer (as applicable) as having responsibility for review of phone invoices for his/her Division or Office.

### 4.3 Restrictions

This policy does not apply to any cellular or landline phone services provided by the Executive Branch of government.

### 4.4 Cellular Phones

#### 4.4.1 Acquisition

1. Employees of the House of Assembly Service, Caucus Offices and Statutory Offices will be **limited** to **three (3)** cellular devices **per General Assembly**.
2. The Statutory Officer or Clerk of the House of Assembly (as applicable) must approve the purchase of all new cellular phones.
3. Cellular phones must only be considered for users where the need is established by the requirements of the job. Need may not be based on past usage only and should be reviewed periodically to ensure continued need is established.
4. The type of cellular phone to be provided will be determined by the particular circumstances and the judgment of the Clerk of the House of Assembly or the Statutory Officer.
5. Users must be issued the most economical and efficient service package and hardware which is available under any government standing offer agreements and which meets the particular requirements of the job.
6. General guidelines for assessing need are:
  - There is an essential need for a user to be in contact with other employees, the Clerk or Statutory Officer, or the public during working hours when the employee is not accessible by land line phone.

- There is an essential need for a user to be in contact with other employees, the Clerk or Statutory Officer, or the public after hours or on weekends.
  
  - There is a significant safety issue which dictates a requirement for a user to have a cellular phone and no other viable option is available.
  
  - The user's position will not be the sole reason for being assigned a cellular phone.
  
  - The user's job can be more effectively and efficiently carried out.
6. The purchase of unnecessary technology and/or features is prohibited (for example, camera phones) if extra cost is involved.

#### **4.4.2 General Usage**

1. Cellular phones are to be formally assigned to users and reassigned as appropriate.
  
2. Users are responsible for the security of their cellular phones and should be aware that cellular phone conversations may not always be secure and confidential.
  
3. Users are responsible for ensuring that their cellular phones are used in a manner that is consistent with this policy.
  
4. Cellular phones are intended for business purposes only. However, it is recognized that some incidental personal usage may occur as a result of the user not being accessible by landlines on a regular basis. It is also recognized that the requirement to carry a cellular phone for government business purposes may at times be an intrusion of a user's personal time.
  
5. Users should not widely distribute their cellular phone numbers unless it is necessary for business purposes.
  
6. Users should avail of "temporary suspension of service" or "seasonal suspension" options where appropriate.

7. Land lines should be used instead of cellular phones whenever it is convenient to do so.

#### **4.4.3 Replacements**

1. Employees of the House of Assembly Service, Caucus Offices and Statutory Offices are required to take **reasonable and appropriate care** of their cellular devices.
2. Replacement cellular devices will only be issued with the prior approval of the Clerk/Statutory Officer where:
  - The employee is within his/her limit of 3 cellular devices per General Assembly;
  - The cellular package allows an upgrade at \$0; or
  - A manufacturer's defect with the device has been established.

#### **4.5 Landline Phones**

1. Users are responsible for ensuring that the long distance charges on each landline phone assigned for his/her use were incurred by the user for business purposes.
2. Users are responsible for reimbursing to the Newfoundland Exchequer Account through the Central Cashier's office the cost of personal long distance calls when the total cost of personal calls in one month exceeds \$1.

#### **4.6 Administrative Matters**

- Users are not required to reimburse Government for incidental personal phone or data usage on cellular phones. Personal usage that exceeds what is considered "incidental" must be reimbursed to Government.
- The Clerk of the House of Assembly or the Statutory Officer (as applicable) has the authority to determine the acceptable threshold for incidental usage for their individual users. Some general guidelines would be: personal usage that exceeds 10% of the monthly airtime/data usage costs; airtime exceeding 80 minutes per month; or some other reasonable basis that is consistent with the business demands placed upon the cellular phone holder.

- For those users without a government issued cellular phone, occasional business usage of personal cellular phones may be reimbursed if general policies and procedures regarding reimbursement of business use of personal property are followed, including approval by the user's supervisor. Original cellular phone invoices identifying charges are required for reimbursements. Reimbursement is for per minute charges only and monthly system access fees or other recurring charges for personal cellular phones will not be reimbursed.
- Each user should avail of temporary cellular phone packages when travelling to the United States. Contact Corporate and Members' Services Division (CMS) staff to arrange the period of coverage.
- The Clerk of the House of Assembly or the Statutory Officer (as applicable) will designate a "responsible individual" for each division/office of the Legislature to perform a monthly review of phone bills.
- Each billing period, CMS will send copies of all phone invoices for the Division or Statutory office to the "responsible individual". The "responsible individual" must review the invoices and sign a statement each billing period to indicate that the invoices have been reviewed and are reasonable and in accordance with any applicable contracts or policies. All signed statements must be forwarded to CMS on a timely basis. The statement must also note any matters for follow-up or attention by CMS staff.
- A detailed review may not be feasible for cellular phone invoices, given the nature of cellular phones, the inherent difficulty in identifying the nature of certain phone calls (especially incoming calls due to lack of detail on the bill), and the relatively insignificant amounts involved in some cases. Therefore, a reasonable review of the invoice details is acceptable.