

COUNTY OF PLUMAS CELLULAR PHONE POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The rapid changing world of wireless communication provides an opportunity for County Departments to ensure efficient, safe, and high-quality customer service to the citizens of Plumas County.

Purpose of Policy:

This policy states the official guidelines for County paid cellular phone allowances for use of personal cellular phones for County business purposes; and for County owned phones and County paid cellular phone bills.

The County will not provide County-owned phones or pay cellular phone bills unless specifically requested by the department head. County owned phones/County paid bills will require that specific guidelines be followed in order to comply with IRS code. Based on identified departmental needs, designated employees will receive a monthly cellular phone allowance when employees use their personal cellular phone for County business purpose.

2. PROCEDURES

All employees who meet the "work-related need" may be eligible to receive cellular phone privileges. Department heads shall determine which employees meet the "work-related need" in their department and those employees shall receive cellular phone privileges as provided in this policy.

Upon approval of a department head, an employee may be authorized to receive County cellular phone privileges for the following "work-related needs":

- Providing safety of self or others who may be at risk.
- Providing communications access for an employee whose main work location is in the field where land lines and there is no reasonable alternative technology available.
- Routinely being contacted, by the public or other County office, after regular business hours.
- Being required to travel in and out of County on a routine basis.
- Providing emergency and backup support from a mobile environment.
- Department heads providing immediate communication with staff and other agencies as required to coordinate programs and/or provide customer support.

All other "needs" will require County Administrative Officer approval; if department head does not agree with CAO, request can then be taken to the Board of Supervisors.

Adopted 5/15/07

3. CELLULAR PHONE ALLOWANCE

A department head who determines that an employee has need of a cell phone for work-related purposes and that it is in the best interest of the public, department and employee to receive an allowance, and who meets the work-related needs, shall have the employee complete and submit the Cellular Phone Service Allowance Request; the department head will assign a tier based on the criteria, authorize and sign the request and submit to Human Resources. If the employee has completed the "other" work-related need field and the department head agrees there is a need for the cell phone the request must be signed by the County Administrative Officer prior to being submitted to Human Resources. Department heads and elected officials shall sign and submit their request to Human Resources.

A. CRITERIA

Departmental criteria for determining work-related need for assignment is as follows:

- The employee's work requires wide mobility and simultaneous access to communication networks.
- The employee works outside the office or is required to travel on a routine basis.
- The employee's work requires timely and business critical two-way communication for which there is no reasonable alternative technology available.
- The employee provides emergency and backup support from a mobile environment.
- The employee routinely is contacted, by the public or county office, after regular business hours.

All other needs require CAO authorization.

B. GUIDELINES

The cellular phone allowance is intended to cover the costs of personal cellular phone expenses related to work duties when the department head determines that it is in the best interest for the public, employee and department. Initial purchase of the cellular phone, accessory equipment, and activation fees will be the responsibility of the employee.

No allowance will be paid when an employee is in an unpaid status.

C. TAXABILITY

The cellular phone allowance will be paid through the County payroll system as taxable income. For determination of individual taxability, employees should check with their tax advisor.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES

- The employee must provide the cellular telephone number on the Cellular Phone Service Allowance Request, the department head will authorize and forward the request to Human Resources who will activate the monthly payment allowance.
- The department head will be required to send written notice of termination of the allowance if the employee goes on unpaid status or terminates. The department head shall do this immediately upon notice of the unpaid status or termination, not as part of the Personnel Action Form process.
- The department head shall be responsible for assessing the employees work related need and assigned Tier annually and/or in the event that the employee's work duties change. The department head shall be responsible for informing the employee that they will be required to complete a new request form and for making sure that the new form is submitted to Human Resources.
- Replacement or repair of the phone will be the responsibility of the employee who uses the phone.

4. ALLOWANCE PLAN

For designated, eligible employees, there shall be a three-tier reimbursement plan:

- a. Tier I allowance - \$20.00 per month based upon work duties that require incidental use of cell phone or where other communication devices are available but cell phones are required as emergency b a c k u p .
- b. Tier II allowance - \$50.00 per month based upon work duties that require more than incidental business use of cell phone.
- c. Tier III allowance - \$80.00 per month based upon work duties that require frequent out of office work and there are no other communication devices (i.e. hand-held radios, car radios) available. Limited to elected officials, department heads, and first/emergency responders that frequently use cell phones for emergency communication because there are no other communication devices.

Department heads and elected officials may elect to receive Tier I or II or III allowance based on their plan and the amount of time they use cellular phones.

5. TRANSFER OF SERVICE OF COUNTY-OWNED CELL PHONE AND/OR COUNTY SERVICE AGREEMENT

Employees who request and receive authorization for the cellular phone allowance will be required to give written notice to the department head stating if they wish to transfer the existing service contract.

- A. The department head and employee will be required to contact the current provider to coordinate the transfer.
- B. The employee will maintain the present phone number, if transfer is elected.
- C. Upon transfer the employee may continue the service at the current level or may change/upgrade by contacting the provider, all costs associated with a change will be the employee's responsibility.
- D. If the employee transfers the current service contract into their name, they will be eligible to keep the cell phone, if they do not transfer the existing contract the phone shall be returned, in working condition, to the Auditor's department. It shall be the department head's responsibility for making sure that non-transfer phones are returned.
- E. The employee will be eligible for the allowance after the final bill, for the number currently assigned to them, is paid by the County-it shall be the department head's responsibility to make sure that the final bill is paid PRIOR to submitting the request form to Human Resources to ensure that double payment is not being made.

6. CELL PHONES FOR ENTIRE DEPARTMENT

In the event that a department head deems it necessary to provide a cell phone for the use of the entire department, it shall be the department head's responsibility to have the employee sign a written statement stating that they are aware that under no circumstances can the County cell phone be used directly or indirectly for personal use. It will be the department heads responsibility to audit the phone records and to keep the statement in their department.

7. COUNTY CONTRACTUAL SERVICE COMMITMENTS

If the County currently has a contractual agreement that will cause penalties in the event that the employee does not wish to transfer the plan, the employee, assigned that number, will not be eligible for the allowance until the contractual commitment has expired.

- 1. The employee shall be required to complete and sign the cell phone log and to submit monthly to the department head.
- 2. The department head shall audit and sign the cell phone log.
- 3. The cell phone log, detailed bill and claim shall be submitted to the Auditor's department for payment. Confidential and/or sensitive phone numbers may be redacted, however, the number of calls and minutes per call must be visible.
- 4. The County will not pay early termination penalties.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD ON 5/15/07

CELLULAR PHONE SERVICE ALLOWANCE REQUEST

Employee#

Last Name

First Name

Department #

Work Phone#

Cell Phone#

Please circle one:

Existing

New

Change

Discontinue

Work Related Need (please circle all that apply):

- YES NO Does the employee's work require wide mobility & simultaneous access to communication networks?
- YES NO Does the employee work outside the office or is required to travel on a regular basis?
- YES NO Does the employee's work require timely and business critical two-way communication for which there is no reasonable alternative technology available?
- YES NO Does the employee provide emergency and backup support from a mobile environment?
- YES NO Is the employee routinely contacted, by the public or other county office after regular business hours?

Other, please explain:

*** (If other, this request will require County Administrative Officer signature)

Circle one

- Tier I \$20.00--based upon work duties that require incidental business use of cell phone or where other communication devices are available but cell phones are required as emergency backup
- Tier II \$50.00--based upon work duties that require more than incidental business use of cell phone
- Tier III \$80.00--based upon work duties that require frequent out of office work and there are no other communication devices (i.e. hand-held radios, car radios) available. **(Limited to** elected officials, department heads, first/emergency responders that **frequently** use cell phones for emergency communication)

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DEPARTMENT HEAD SIGNATURE

*** CAO SIGNATURE, IF "OTHER" WAS COMPLETED