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# Acquisition and Use of Telecommunications Services and Equipment [1]

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PM-04-002 Acquisition and Use of Telecommunications Services and Equipment

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## **1. Legislative Authority**

In accordance with legislative intent set forth in O.C.G.A § 45-12-70 et. seq. and O.C.G.A § 50-25-4 (a) (10), the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), in partnership with the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) hereby promulgate the following Statewide policy.

O.C.G.A § 45-12-70 authorizes OPB to develop financial plans for the State, to coordinate the fiscal affairs of the State and to see that the financial resources of the State are used most efficiently. In 2000, O.C.G.A. § 50-25-4 (a) (10) invested GTA with the authority to set technology policy for all agencies except those under the authority, direction, or control of the General Assembly or statewide elected officials other than the Governor. Additionally, in O.C.G.A § 50-25-1 agency means every state department, agency, board, bureau, commission, and authority but shall not include any agency within the judicial branch of state government or the University System of Georgia.

## **2. Statement of Policy**

It shall be the responsibility of each State agency to manage and minimize the costs of using telecommunications services and equipment. This policy applies to all State departments, institutions, boards, bureaus, agencies, authorities, colleges and universities (all are which hereinafter referred to as ?agency? or collectively as ?agencies?). Each agency shall develop a telecommunications policy based upon the guidelines established in this statewide policy. Agencies will be responsible for maintaining adequate documentation to ensure that these guidelines and criteria have been met.

## **3. Definition of Terms**

The terminology contained within this document is in accordance with Webster?s Dictionary except for the terms specifically defined in this section.

**Usage Sensitive Services** ? Those services whose recurring charges are based on a per unit measure such as minutes used or per occurrence of use

- Examples include wireless Internet service, cellular airtime or 800 MHz with interconnect, roaming charges and long distance calling, where such services are charged on a per minute or per occurrence basis.

**Wireless Device** ? devices that receive and/or send transmission using wireless technology such as cellular or radio frequency (RF) signaling.

- Examples include cellular or PCS phones, blackberries, personal digital assistance with connectivity, two-way radios (traditional and trunked technologies) and pagers. These do **not** include cordless telephones or headsets.

**Mobile Device** ? devices that are portable rather than continuously connected via physical wiring to electricity or network connectivity.

- Examples include laptops, Personal Digital Assistants (PDA).

**Fixed** ? equipment connected by physical wiring to a cabling infrastructure for connectivity to voice, data, video or radio communications systems.

**Security** ? provision that assures safety, protection or defense of voice, data or video transmissions of confidential or sensitive information.

## **4. Policy**

Each agency shall control and minimize the costs of using telecommunications services and equipment by the following means:

- Control usage sensitive telecommunications costs by:
  - promoting the proper use of lines with long distance capability, telephone calling cards, devices having per minute access charges such as cellular or trunked radio connectivity;
    - Each agency shall manage access to long distance services. (Example: Identify the appropriate accessibility for long distance services by telephone line number or telephone instrument and limit its availability in common use areas.)
  - monitoring these costs using telephone invoices or other documented methodology to validate usage sensitive charges; and
  - prohibiting personal or non-job-related long distance telephone calls from State and non-State telephones and charging the costs to the State (i.e. 3rd Party Billed Calls, Collect Calls), whenever possible. Agencies that require employees to make job-related long distance telephone calls from other than State telephones will provide the employees with state (or GTA) issued telephone calling cards, whenever possible.
    - Employees who are issued telephone calling cards should be required to use them only when away from their offices and at locations that do not have state telephones with long distance access.
- Prohibit use of charge based directory assistance such as 411 and (area code)-555-1212.
- Prohibit personal use of "511?", "900" and "976" phone services. Employees are allowed to make only job-related "511?", "900" and "976" telephone calls.
- Control the costs of wireless access by carefully managing the use of state devices for unauthorized purposes. (See Section 11.0)
- Control the costs of auxiliary communications equipment by limiting the personal use of facsimile

equipment, computer communications, scanners, printers, pagers and other state provided technology.

- Ensure that fixed services are utilized by employees rather than wireless devices generating usage sensitive charges when fixed services are readily available.
  - Example: using cellular technology at an office when a desktop service arrangement is at hand.
- Maintain an inventory of all wireless devices that lists each individual device, the service provider for such device and the individual (or in the case of shared wireless devices, the smallest identifiable organizational unit) to which the device is assigned. Such inventory must be kept current by the agency and made available for inspection by the Department of Audits, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and/or the Georgia Technology Authority upon request.

#### **4.1 Usage Sensitive Services**

Each agency shall manage and monitor usage sensitive telecommunications services for the purpose of minimizing costs.

#### **4.2 Monitoring Usage Sensitive Services**

Each agency should implement a methodology that includes a monitoring process to validate and control usage sensitive charges as discussed in Section 4 of this policy memorandum. Each agency shall document their internal telecommunications monitoring process and keep the process in their agency files for auditing purposes.

Agencies are required to obtain detailed billing for any usage sensitive services from all service providers identifying each long distance call, calling card call, cellular call or other usage sensitive services by the telecommunications device incurring the usage. (Examples of providers are GTA, Verizon, Alltel, Blackberry, Motorola, etc.) The monitoring methodology should include a procedure to verify that charges billed to the State demonstrate appropriate use based on a sample of the usage listed on the invoice for telecommunications services.

#### **4.3 Wireless and Mobile Devices**

The use of wireless and mobile technology by government employees has increased over the years as the technology has matured and proved itself as an effective communication tool. Its use has changed how we do business. Appropriate use of this technology allows employees to be more responsive to the citizens they serve.

##### **4.3.1 Guidelines for Acquisition and Use of Wireless and Mobile Devices**

As an overview, an agency is authorized to provide wireless or mobile devices to its employees in accordance with the provisions of this policy. In the remainder of this section, proposed criteria for determining the need for such device(s) and guidelines for acquiring such device(s) are presented. If it is determined that a wireless or mobile device is a necessary component of a job function, then consideration should be given to such device(s) being maintained in a pool for shared use among employees unless this is not practical.

##### **4.3.2 Criteria for Determining the Need for Wireless and Mobile Devices**

Agencies must establish and adopt written criteria to determine which job functions have a legitimate business need for wireless or mobile devices. Agencies shall utilize their criteria prior to assigning any such devices. Where communications needs cannot be met with fixed telephone or desktop computer equipment, an agency must use their criteria for issuing these devices. Criteria under which these devices could be issued might include the following:

- Device is required to enhance directly an employee's job responsibility of protecting the physical safety of the general public
- Device is required for an employee to respond better to environmental emergencies
- Device is required for additional protection for the employee in potentially hazardous working conditions
- An employee cannot adequately meet communications needs with fixed telecommunications equipment
- Frequent travel (e.g.>25% of time) and required to stay in contact with the office or agency clients. (If travel duties rotate, agencies/institutions should use minimum number of devices to accommodate the maximum number simultaneously on the road.)
- Job requirement is to remain mobile within multiple building/sites where 2-way communications is required (e.g. lodge cleaning personnel, transporters, delivery personnel, desktop support technicians)
- Public Safety/Homeland Security
- On-call personnel who are on-call more than 2 weekends a month. (Agencies/institutions should explore possibility of shared phones if on call duties are shared.)
- Critical staff doing business and expected to do business while commuting and moving from appointment to appointment
- Regular requirement for two-way real-time communication where stationary phones cannot be made available (e.g. new construction area, campus-type environment, highway, etc.)
- Personnel who are required to be accessible at least 80% of the time and away from their office on a frequent basis (e.g.>25% of the time). (Media contacts, etc.)

Positions meeting ?agency criteria? for wireless and mobile devices should be required to use a state provided device and service and not use a personal phone for reimbursement.

#### **4.3.3 Requirements for Acquiring Wireless and Mobile Devices and Services**

Once the need for a wireless or mobile device has been identified, the agency must take diligent steps to ensure that it will be paying the lowest amount for the device and recurring monthly charges. This should include projecting the quantity and type of access service (i.e. minutes, messages, coverage area, Internet, etc.) the wireless device is anticipated to use each month.

- In the absence of an enterprise (i.e. statewide) contract, the agency should obtain quotes from vendors and examine packages so that it can be assured that it will select the vendor and package which will result in the lowest cost considering monthly fee, air time, service area, roaming charges or any other applicable functionality required that is offered with additional cost outside the package

selected.

- Where volume discounts can be obtained, these should be considered as well.
- When an enterprise (i.e. or statewide) contract is available, the agency **must** utilize such contract(s) **unless** granted a written exception by the state government entity overseeing such contract.

#### **4.3.4 Criteria for Issuing a Wireless or Mobile Device**

Where an agency's criteria has determined that a legitimate need for a wireless or mobile device exists, the agency must then make a determination as to whether the device should be issued full-time to an individual employee for exclusive use, or be maintained as part of a shared pool where the device can be used by several employees on an as-needed basis.

## **5. Use of Personal Wireless Devices or Usage Sensitive Services for State Business**

Agencies may authorize employees to receive reimbursements for occasional business-related calls made from their personal usage sensitive or wireless devices. Documented agency methodology for reimbursement must be kept on file for auditing purposes.

- Such reimbursements shall be for the costs of business related calls only and shall not include any portion of the cost of personal equipment or installation.
- Those employees who are authorized by their agencies to receive reimbursements for occasional state business use on personal devices shall be required to submit a copy of their technology bill identifying the business related usage with sufficient detail to verify the reimbursable usage.
- Agencies and employees are hereby on notice that such documents are subject to disclosure (in whole or in part) under the Georgia Open Records Act.

## **6. Method of Reimbursement for State Usage on Personal Devices**

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 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, the state will reimburse at the actually accrued per minute charge billed by the service provider. The state will reimburse for roaming, long distance or other applicable charges for business related purposes.
  - 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 measured service within a user's pre-paid service plan.**

## **7. Budgeting for Wireless Devices and Usage Sensitive Services**

Expenditures for wireless devices and usage sensitive services shall be reported separately from other expenditures for communications services on the Schedule of Telecommunications in the annual budget request submission to OPB.

- In each agency's annual budget request submission, the agency shall include an inventory of wireless devices, by type on hand.
- The agency shall also provide a listing of wireless devices to be acquired for the next fiscal year.
  - This submission shall also include a total expenditure by wireless device category for previous fiscal years and a budget for current and future fiscal years.
- Unless an agency obtains prior budgetary approval to acquire wireless devices and associated usage sensitive services, the agency will not receive any funding above the continuation level for related future year costs.

## **8. Internal Agency Policies**

Each agency that has wireless and/or mobile devices and usage sensitive communications plans in operation or desires to acquire such, shall draft and maintain an internal policy that complies with the provisions of this policy memorandum. Such policy shall at a minimum:

- Specify criteria for determining whether an employee's communications needs dictate the use of a wireless or mobile device;
- Specify criteria for determining whether a wireless or mobile device shall be authorized for a specific employee or unit;
- Specify authorized uses and unauthorized uses of wireless or mobile devices;
- Establish procedures for approving the acquisition of wireless or mobile devices;
- Establish procedures for reviewing and approving continued use of wireless or mobile devices;
- Include notice to employees expressly stating there is no right to privacy for any use of state telecommunications equipment.
  - Example: Agency 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 their respective servers and/or property. (See [Privacy in the Workplace, SS-12-001](#) <sup>[7]</sup>).
- Establish documentation standards; and,
- Indicate any additional steps responsible agency staff will take to contain the costs of operating wireless or mobile devices.

In addition each agency shall maintain an inventory of all wireless and mobile devices that lists each individual device, the name of the service provider for such device and the individual (or in the case of shared wireless devices, the smallest identifiable organizational unit) to which the device is assigned. Such inventory must be kept current by the agency and made available for inspection by the Department of Audits, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and/or the Georgia Technology Authority upon request.

## **9. Use of Communications Equipment and Services**

Each agency shall manage and monitor the use of communications equipment and services for the purpose of minimizing costs.

Agencies should consider the costs/benefits of assigning communications devices in lieu of paying salaries and overtime to employees who are frequently required to be on standby status.

Expenditures for wireless devices and service charges shall be reported separately from other expenditures for communications services on the Schedule of Telecommunications in the annual budget request submission to OPB.

## **10. Communications Acquisitions, Replacements, and Upgrades**

Agencies shall consider the costs of acquiring, replacing, upgrading or moving communications systems and rearranging communications equipment within offices to determine the long-term fiscal impact of such decisions. Agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Planning and Budget before authorizing GTA to make changes in their communications system and units of the University System of Georgia must obtain permission from the University System CIO when:

- The total amount for equipment, one-time fees, supplies, installation or relocation costs exceed \$50,000, regardless of the proposed method of financing or the number of years over which payments are to be spread, including monthly operating costs;

**OR**

- ?When the total of ongoing connectivity charges, service fees and maintenance fees results in any increase that would require a budget request in the amended budget.

The agency requesting communications system changes is responsible for seeking a letter of approval from the Office of Planning and Budget. The request should include an explanation of the acquisition or system changes and the reason for them, location for the acquisition or system changes, the quoted charge from GTA, and the fund source (i.e. existing funds, bond issuance, lapse funds, etc.) The University System CIO should make available to OPB, upon request, a list of approved communications acquisitions, replacements, and upgrades with supporting documentation.

## **11. Security of Communications**

Security of sensitive information is paramount. Sensitive communications are suggested to be conducted through wireless technologies configured to the highest security configuration possible. Agencies are responsible to determine the level of security required to meet their business objective and bear the risk associated with using settings other than the highest available. Agencies are strongly cautioned against using wireless communications to transmit or store sensitive information. Documented security awareness training should include wireless device orientation and provide the user with the definitions of what constitutes sensitive information.

## **12. Prohibited Uses of Communications Technologies**

Certain uses or attempted usage of state provided technology equipment and services are strictly prohibited. In addition to those restrictions agencies include in their agency policies, the following prohibitions shall apply to all state provided equipment and services:

- Conducting private or personal for-profit activities. This includes use for private purposes such as

business transactions, private advertising of products or services, and any activity meant to foster personal gain;

- Conducting unauthorized not-for-profit business activities;
- Conducting any illegal activities as defined by federal, state, and local laws or regulations;
- Creating, accessing or transmitting sexually explicit, obscene, or pornographic material;
- Creating, accessing or transmitting material that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, threatening, harassing, or intimidating;
- Creating, accessing, or participation in online gambling;
- Infringement of any copyright, trademark, patent or other intellectual property rights;
- Performing any activity that could cause the loss, corruption of or prevention of rightful access to data or the degradation of system/network performance;
- Conducting any activity or solicitation for political or religious causes;
- Unauthorized distribution of state data and information;
- Attempts to subvert the security of any state or other network or network resources;
- Use of another employee's access for any reason unless explicitly authorized; ?
- Attempts to modify or remove computer equipment, software, or peripherals without proper authorization; and,
- Attempts to libel or otherwise defame any person.

Agencies may establish more stringent policies and procedures consistent with this Enterprise Policy and associated Standards. This policy incorporates by reference ? [Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources PS-08-003](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, issued by the Georgia Technology Authority.

## **13. Agencies Right to Monitor Communications**

Agencies shall expressly reserve the right to monitor and review all communications or other transmissions made to or from an agency provided device without further notice to employees to the maximum extent permissible by law. Agencies shall include similar notices in their agency specific policies.

## **14. Exemptions**

If an agency has special or unusual circumstances that the agency believes warrant an exemption from any of these regulations, the agency should notify the Office of Planning and Budget of the circumstances in writing and request a specific written exemption. Requests for exemptions for units of the University System of Georgia will be sent to the University System CIO who will coordinate with the Office of Planning and Budget. The Office of Planning and Budget will furnish copies of approved exemptions to the State Chief Information Officer and to the State Auditor for their information when conducting financial and performance audits.

## **15. Effective Date**

These policy provisions shall be effective as of August 1, 2004. Continued revisions and updates may be necessary from time to time for the effective administration of applicable State law as determined by the Office of Planning and Budget and the Georgia Technology Authority.

This policy was reviewed and revised by the Office of Planning and Budget and the Georgia Technology Authority September 2006.

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