

TELEPHONE POLICY

Northern Cape Provincial Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs,
Rural Development and Land Reform

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DEPARTMENTAL TELEPHONE POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the efficient and effective functioning of DAERL communication is seen and regarded as a means that enables service delivery. The achievement of service delivery may also be enhanced when management makes available communication devices and put in place control measures for such devices being place at the disposal of its employees. The accounting officer, programmer managers and delegated district officials are responsible for the management of communication within DAERL.

This policy document covers the utilisation of communication devices within the work ecosystem of all programmers and directorates within DAERL. It has been developed and is intended to provide clarity regarding the determination, use, allocation and limits attached to communication devices within DAERL, thus supporting efficient and effective service delivery across the departmental business units in the most cost-effective way.

Over the years monthly reports of telephones have revealed that calls made are one of the major cost drivers and expense of DAERL. This is attributed mainly to the high volumes of calls made and they may be either private or official. It is in that context that the department must endeavour to keep telephone calls expenditure within limits. This would in a small measure reduce low productivity resulting from the downtime on private calls.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy document is stated herein under;

- To provide for a framework that assists the department in the determination to allocate cell phones and other communication devices deemed as work tools to officials.
- To provide officials with communication devices which would enable them to make essential and allowable calls in cases where the use of other communication means are neither economical, cost-effective and practical.
- To provide for certain guidelines and procedures for the application, utilisation, securing, allocating, acquisition, approval and withdrawal of communication devices.

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- To provide for a sliding downscale in the allocation of communication devices and/or provide for certain exclusions based on applications informed by the nature of the job.
- To provide guidance to the accounting officer and to standardise the utilisation of communication devices.
- To prevent the use of departmental telephones by unauthorised persons
- To introduce corrective measures for officials who fail to observe the guidelines as stipulated in this policy.
- To curb the abuse of telephones by employees of the department and to reduce costs.
- To conform to and/ or inform the annual budget process and prescribed budgeting and reporting responsibilities by means of correctly costing of this cost driver.

3. DEFINITIONS

Accumulative	: not carried over the next month.
Private Cell phone	: means any cell phone not acquired by the Department
International calls	: telephone calls destined to outside the geographic boundaries of South Africa
Low productivity	: low working rate over time
PFMA	: Public Finance Management Act
Policy	: Telephone usage policy
Private calls	: calls not related to business operations of the Department
Private lines	: telephone lines not linked to the telephone
Sim card	: subscriber identity module
Soft-lock	: means the temporary blocking of the cell phone so that no outgoing calls can be made and incoming calls can be received
Supervisor	: a person who supervises activities or people
Telecommunication act	: means the Telecommunication Act 1996 (Act no 103 of 1996)

Telecommunication Service Provider means:

- a) The telecommunication services as defined in the Telecommunication Act

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- b) Any person who provides a telecommunication service under and in accordance with a telecommunication service licence issued to such person under the act
- c) Internet service provider

Devices Upgrade	: after expiring of the contract it may be renewed for a period with the benefit of a newer and better cellular phone
User	: the person who uses the device
Voice-mail	: a feature provided by the network operators in which a recorded message may be left on a cell phone for future reference.

4. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy is guided by a number of legislations and policy imperatives. Therefore it needs to be read in conjunction with the following legislative and policy prescripts , public sector directives, guidelines and departmental policies and procedures as listed below but not limited to them;

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa
- Public Finance Management Act No1 of 1999
- Public Service Act
- Public Service Regulations as amended 2016
- Public Service Handbooks as issued by DPSA
- Telecommunications Act No 103 of 1996
- Regulations of interception of Communication and Provision of Communication Related Information Act No 70 of 2002
- Transformation of the Public Service 1995
- Transforming the Public Service Delivery White Paper of 1997
- Treasury Regulations

To give context the responsibility of managing and controlling a cellular phone is assigned in terms of Sections 38(1)(b) and 38(2) of the PFMA to the accounting officer

Furthermore Treasury Regulations 10.1.1 (a) and 10.1.1 states

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5. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Responsiveness

Accountability

Innovative

Professionalism

Integrity

Climate smart

Efficiency

6. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy is applicable to all employees of DAERL who are authorised to utilise communication devices in furtherance of their duties and with emphasis to all users of official allocated handsets and/ other devices.

The provisions of this policy with respect to limits of usage may be adjusted as the contract provisions and as such amendments may be in the form of departmental circulars as supplements to this policy.

Any subsequent amendments or circulars issued after approval of this policy shall supersede the relevant and affected provisions of this policy.

7. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION DEVICES

7.1. Provision of Services

7.1.1 The provision and supply of communication devices for various users shall be done through a telecommunication service provider that has been awarded a tender by the government.

7.1 2. The communication between the appointed service provider/s and DAERL must be done via the Chief Director Corporate Services as the delegated official as Account Administrator

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7.1 ALLOCATION OF CELLULAR PHONES.

7.2 1. Cellular phones must be seen as working tools and as such officials who are deemed to be in need of such tools may be allocated one as per their official responsibilities and workload.

7.2.2. The following officials as a result of their responsibilities, duties and positions qualifies to be allocated and be provided with a cell phone and other communication devices;

- MEC
- HOD
- All SMS members

7.2.3. The following category of officials to be allocated and provided with a cellular phone and other communication devices must be accompanied by a motivation from the director and be supported by the Programme Manager and recommended by the CFO and Chief Director Corporate Services for approval by the accounting officer;

- All MMS
- All Assistant Manager
- Personal Assistants to MEC and HOD
- Personal Assistants to Chief Directors and Secretary to Directors
- Media liaison and Communication Officers
- Extension Officers and Animal Health Technicians
- Technicians and Network Controllers
- Office Service and Spend Managers
- Drivers of departmental vehicles and Messenger Drivers
- Any other category of officials as deemed to be in need of a communication device as a result of work demands.

7.2.4. For any allocation and provision of a communication device a memorandum or submission must be prepared with the following documents to be attached;

- Cellular phone application form
- Certified copy of applicants ID document
- Departmental Stop order/payment form

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8. RECORD KEEPING

8.1 The Office Service must keep a file for each communication device contract/user

8.2 Each file that is kept should at least contain the following

- a) Copy of the communication device contract
- b) Approved memorandum/submission to acquire the device, with
- c) Approved communication device application form (Annexure A)
- d) Debt/Slip/payment order from
- e) Any other relevant documentation used in the administration of the allocated communication devices.

8.3 A departmental register of all communication devices with their users must be kept and such file shall contain the following

- a) Type of contract
- b) Device Cellular phone number
- c) Serial number
- d) Name of the official issued to
- e) Start and end date of the contract
- f) Date of issue
- g) Monthly rental limits

9. SAFEKEEPING

All employees are obliged and are responsible for the safe keeping of cellular phones and all other communication devices.

9.1 THEFT, LOSS OR DAMAGE

9.1.1 All lost or stolen cellular phones and other communication devices must be reported by the user to the SAPS and Office Service WITHIN 24 hours of such occurrence.

9.1.2 Official are responsible for the replacement of a lost, stolen or damaged handset with the simcard.

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9.2 APPROVAL

- 9.2.1 In terms of the law depending on the financial procurement delegation and the management of such delegated function the power to approve may be delegated to the Chief Corporate Services
- 9.2.2 After approval of such an application by the Accounting Officer the delegated official and/or Chief Director Corporate Services shall sign the agreement of the cellular phone and other communication devices contract.
- 9.2.3 In the absence of financial and procurement delegations and/or above such delegated functions the power vested with the Accounting Officer as the delegator.

9.3 PROCUREMENT

- 9.3.1 The acquisition of cellular phones and other communication devices must be procured in accordance with the departmental procurement policies and procedures.
- 9.3.2 For cost effective procurement any package must include the following:
 - a) Handset
 - b) Sim card
 - c) CLT or Clip monthly subscription
 - d) Itemised billing
 - e) Once off connection fee
 - f) Voice minutes, data SMS's

9.4 CELLULAR PHONES LIMITS

- 9.4.1 All cellular phones limits must be approved by the Accounting Officer and circulated within the department.
- 9.4.2 Office service unit has a responsibility to ensure compliance to approve limits.
- 9.4.3 All cellular phones must be soft –locked when reaching the monthly limit as determined and set.

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9.5 INTERNATIONAL ROAMING

- 9.5.1 Authorisation to make use of Internal roaming whilst out of the country on official duties must be approved by the Accounting Officer.
- 9.5.2 On return from abroad such approved International roaming must be cancelled.
- 9.5.3 If the International roaming is not cancelled on return by the user, the official must be held liable for any expenses and/ or calls incurred.

9.6 UPGRADE

- 9.6.1 The communication in respect of upgrades must be signed by the Accounts Administrator and/ or District Director or delegated official at the District Level to the service provider.
- 9.6.2 When a handset upgrade is received by an official, the official may elect to retain the old handset for free or may deposit it as part of the department pool handsets.

9.7 INTERCEPTION AND DECRYPTION

The powers functions and duties as described in Act 70 of 2002 of the regulations of Interception of communication and provision of communication. Related Information shall apply to all departmental officials making use of official cellular phone.

9.8 PRIVATE CELLULAR PHONE USAGE

- 9.8.1 The department must not accept the utilisation of private cellular phone except in exceptional circumstances and cases
- 9.8.2 In some instances, such cases might be when officials are awaiting approved or acquisition of official communication devices.
- 9.8.3 In such a case DAERL will reimburse official on the availability of approved official calls and utilisation only.
- 9.8.4 Such reimbursement will only be permissible and allowed on prior approval by the Accounts Administrator after a proper motivation has been advance and accepted.

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9.8.5 All claims for private utilisation must follow the normal subscription claim procedure

10. LANDLINES

Heads of Departments are allowed to come up with other control measures which are in line with the Policy.

- I. The Head of Department shall determine which officials may have cell phones for use in connection with the performance of their official duties;
- II. Except in the case of employees provided with cell phones, all outgoing telephone call shall be directed through the switchboard{s} of the Department.
- III. It shall be the duty of the person making the call, before dialling the number required to indicate whether the call is official or private in nature.
- IV. Where an employee has a cell phone/private line, that employee shall be obliged to maintain the telephone log book and submit it to the respective authority at the end of the month.
- V. The Department shall provide an electronic device for the monitoring of all outstanding telephone calls
- VI. At the end of the month, the Switchboard Operator shall provide the Finance Department with a complete list of officials who have made private telephone calls and cost thereof during the month in question, the destination of such call and its duration.
- VII. The finance department shall, on the basis of information supplied in respect of private calls made by an official provide such official with a detailed statement of the private calls made and the total cost thereof including VAT
- VIII. The finance program shall supply the Human Resources program with the list of deductions required for the month in question in respect of private calls made by the official.
- IX. Officials shall only be entitled to make international calls with the specific approval of the Department.

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11. AVAILABILITY OF THE POLICY

Every official upon being appointed in the Department shall be supplied with a copy of this Policy and shall acknowledged receipt thereof by signing a duplicate copy thereof. The said duplicate copy shall be filed on the personal file of the official.

12. CONSEQUENCE OF NON- COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with the Policy will be viewed as a serious disciplinary transgression and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

The Accounting Officer will also have the power to withdraw such facility if it is in the interest of the Department to do so, or if the following circumstances have been identified.

- I. If official is negligent
- II. If the cellular phone is misused (example, too many private calls)
- III. If it is not a necessity according to the job description

13. OFFICIAL LEAVING DEPARTMENT OR CONTRACT EXPIRES

Where an employee leaves the employment of the Department, such an employee may request to take ownership of the phone at book value and contract subject to vetting and approved by the communication device service provider.

All costs associated for such a transfer shall be for the employees account of any, unless the service provider advises otherwise for termination or as per instruction of the Accounting Officer.

Where an employee decides to return the communication devices with all accessories including but not limited to the battery, charger and sim card must be returned to the Unit Asset Manager as facilitated by Corporate Services.

The employee shall at his/her own voluntarily provide the following information with regards to the devices if so required.

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- a) Single in-line memory (sim) card
- b) Pin unblocking key (Puk) number

All communication devices recorded or returned from employees will be assigned to the pool or be re-allocated to new employees who are authorised to obtain communication devices in terms of the departmental policy until the contract expires or otherwise directed by the Accounting Officer.

14. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed when the need arises or in case of the occurrence of extenuating circumstances (political mitigation, or pronouncement by legislation and /or regulations). The contact person for this Policy will be required to submit all relevant information pertaining to this Policy in conjunction with a signed memo with all amendments (addition of omission) during the third quarter annually.

The exception, the Policy development unit will be conducting all extenuating reviews throughout the year, therefore it is paramount that a new information received be submitted to this unit, in order to coordinate the review process of this Policy.

15. POLICY IMPACT

The desire of this Policy is to inform management and staff of the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform regarding the usage of state telephones. This document aspires to outline the procedures to be followed in handling the issuance and monitoring of state telephones to avoid corrupt practices/mismanagement of the Department finances.

16. ADOPTION OF POLICY

☒ Recommended/ not recommended


.....

MR MANDLA NDZILILI

Chief Director: Corporate Services

25/11/2024
.....
Date

DEPARTMENTAL TELEPHONE POLICY

✓
Recommended/ not recommended



.....

MS PRUDENCE CATITA
Chief Financial Officer

24/12/03
.....

Date

✓
Approved/ ~~not approved~~

 03/12/2024
.....

ADV THULANI BINASE
Acting Head of Department

03/12/2024
.....

Date

APPLICATION FORM

Annexure A

Cellular Telephone / Data Device

Name and Surname: _____

Job Title: _____

Programme / Sub Programme: _____

Persal nr: _____

Type of Mobile device: _____

❖ Smart phone ☐

❖ Tablet ☐

❖ Data Card ☐

Reason for request

Signatures:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Supervisor: _____

CFO: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

I have read, agreed and understand the departments Telephone Policy

Employee: Signature _____

Date: _____

Approved / Not Approved

Name: _____

Head of Department:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES LIMITS

ANNEXURE B

MONTHLY ALLOCATIONS FOR MOBILITY PROFILES			
Designation	Voice	Data	SMS
OFFICE OF THE MEC			
Member of the Executive Council (MEC)	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Head of Ministry (HOM)	1500 minutes	45 Gigs	700
Private Secretary	700 minutes	13.5 Gig	500
Media Liaison Office	700 minutes	13.5 Gig	500
Parliamentary Officer	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Registry Clerk	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Receptionist	400 minutes	13.5 Gig	500
Driver/ Messenger	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
VIP Protectors	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
OFFICE OF THE HOD			
Head of Department	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Office Manager	700 minutes	13.5 Gig	500
Personal Assistant	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Office Secretariat	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Chief Directors	1500 minutes	45 Gig	700
Directors	1000 minutes	23 Gig	700
All Core Deputy Directors	700 minutes	13.5 Gig	500



Designation	Voice	Data	SMS
All Core Assistant Directors	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Extension Officers, Agricultural Advisors and Animal Technicians	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Technicians, Communication Officers and Network Controllers	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
All other levels PAs, Secretaries	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500
Drivers and Support	400 minutes	6.5 Gig	500

