

Cell Phone Usage

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1.0 POLICY

Employees are expected to act responsibly and exercise good judgement when utilizing cell phones or other personal electronic devices.

2.0 PURPOSE

The safety and well-being of all employees is our highest priority. Accordingly, this policy about cellular phone usage applies to any device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, surfs the Internet or downloads and allows for the reading of and responding to emails. This policy applies whether the device is Town supplied or personally owned. All employees are expected to follow applicable State and Federal laws regarding the use of cell phones or other Personal Electronic Devices.

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Town of Carolina Beach employees.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Cellular Phone – A portable telephone that sends and receives radio signals through a network of short-range transmitters.
- 4.2 Personal Electronic Device (PED) – Any nonstationary electronic apparatus with singular or multiple capabilities of recording, storing, and/or transmitting data, voice, video, or photo images. This includes but is not limited to laptops, personal digital assistants, pocket personal computers, MP3 players, cellular telephones, thumb drives, video cameras, and pagers.

5.0 ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

- 5.1 **The use of a cell phone while driving is not a requirement of the Town. Safety comes before all other concerns. It is recommended that employees stop their vehicle in a safe place to place or receive a phone call or utilize a PED.** Employees are discouraged from using a cell phone, hands on or hands free, while driving. This includes receiving or placing calls, text messages, surfing the Internet, receiving or responding to email, checking for phone messages, or any other purpose related to employment.
- 5.2 **In North Carolina it is illegal to text while driving.** Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of a phone or PED while driving will be solely responsible for all liabilities that result from such actions. This includes both sending and reading received texts.
- 5.3 Under North Carolina Law, text's sent or received by the Town, except in very limited circumstances, are considered a public record and are subject to inspection upon request. All information created, stored or transmitted on or with Town resources are the property of the Town. The Town reserves the right to inspect or audit any text or email sent or received on Town equipment.

- 5.4 Employees should have no expectation of privacy for any information gathered or maintained on a town owned cell phone or PED.
- 5.5 Employees are required to sign a written acknowledgement that they have received, read, understand, and agree to comply with the Town of Carolina Beach's Cell Phone/PED Usage Policy.

6.0 PROCEDURES

- 6.1 Employees are responsible for the safety and integrity of any cell phone or PED issued to them by the Town. Employees should set up passwords to ensure the protection of information.
- 6.2 The use of Town owned PED's for personal reasons is discouraged. Personal use must be brief and infrequent. Employees who are issued a cellular phone or PED understand that the phone/devices are issued for business use. Cellular phone bills are reviewed when they arrive. Any employee abusing their cell phone privileges may have their phone taken away from them and may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 6.3 Regardless of if a cell phone is Town owned or personally owned by the employee, personal calls and texting during work hours can interfere with employee productivity. Therefore employees are asked to make personal calls and text on non-work time. On the unusual occasion of an emergency or anticipated emergency, the employee's supervisor should be notified of the need to receive calls or texts. Supervisors are expected to monitor cell phone usage of their employees.
- 6.4 To ensure the effectiveness of meetings, cell phones should be placed in the 'silence' or 'vibrate' mode or turned off.
- 6.5 Employees are not allowed to wear ear buds or headphones attached to their cell phones or PED's during business hours. Exceptions may be granted by the Department Head in those cases where the noise level in the work environment exceeds the volume controls of the phone/PED and the employee has a legitimate business need to utilize the cell phone or PED.
- 6.6 Under no circumstances may employees use Town cell phones or PED's to send or receive any material that might be considered offensive including but not limited to pornography, comments or images which could be considered offensive to someone based on sex, race, religion, national origin, age, disability or genetics.

7.0 APPENDIX

- Acknowledgement of Cell Phone Usage