

17.02

Use of UTHSC-H Communications Services – Cellular Communication Services HSC MGMT CAM

POLICY OVERVIEW

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSC-H) may provide cellular communication services, including voice and data, to the UTHSC-H faculty and staff when appropriate and properly authorized under the three programs outlined below:

A. Salary Supplements for Cellular Communication Service

The UTHSC-H may provide salary supplements in the amounts specified below to faculty and staff to offset the cost of personal cellular services required to conduct university business.

A1. Voice Services

Salary supplements of \$65 per month per individual for cellular voice service may be given to employees.

A2. Data Services

Salary supplements of \$50 per month per individual for cellular data service may be given to employees. Employees using a Blackberry device **must** use a UTHSC-H Blackberry server to qualify for the salary supplement.

Supplements may be given for both data and voice cellular services.

Grant funds cannot be used for salary supplements.

Where voice and data services are provided by the carrier under a single price plan, the entire plan must be either grant funded or handled with a supplement.

B. University Provided Cellular Communication Service

Under the following circumstances, the UTHSC-H may pay cellular carriers directly for data and voice services provided to faculty and staff who require such services to conduct university or grant related business.

B1. Voice Services

Departmental funds may be used to purchase and operate cellular phones that are shared among department staff, as with a 'hot' phone, or affixed to UTHSC-H property, such as cars and buildings.

If specifically allowed in the grant, grant funds may be used to pay for cellular voice services.

B2. Data Services

Departmental funds cannot be used to pay for cellular data services.

If explicitly allowed in the grant, grant funds may be used to pay for cellular data services.

C. Reimbursement for Business Use of Personal Cellular Communication Services

Under the following circumstances, faculty and staff may be reimbursed for business use of personal cellular services.

C1. Voice Services

With proper documentation, departments may reimburse faculty and staff for infrequent business use of personal cellular phones. (Grant funds may be used under certain circumstances for this program.)

C2. Data Services

Business use of personal data services cannot be reimbursed.

This policy applies to all UTHSC-H provided cellular services regardless of fund source. Plan A is the most preferable plan because the record keeping and transaction processing requirements are minimal. Use of plans B & C is discouraged due to the complex record keeping and transaction processing requirements.

PROCEDURE

The UTHSC-H has delegated the responsibility for support, coordination, and billing of telecommunications services to the Telecommunication Services Department (Telecommunication Services). With regard to cellular phone services, Telecommunication Services has three functions: 1) developing and administering cellular policy for the UTHSC-H, 2) consulting with UTHSC-H clients on their cellular communications needs as they apply to university business and 3) providing information to departments on available vendor contracts and services.

Departments are responsible for 1) determining the need for cellular services for faculty and staff, 2) selecting the most appropriate program for providing these services, 3) obtaining departmental approval, 4) funding the program and 5) maintaining all required documentation.

A. Salary Supplements for Cellular Communication Service

Salary supplements, in the amount of \$65 per employee per month for voice service and \$50 per employee per month for data service, may be given to faculty and staff who are required to have cellular communication services for university business. The decision to require cellular service should be based on the frequency and criticality of cellular communication. The department head must document this need in writing and retain the documentation in the department. The department must process the payroll transaction to begin and end the supplement as the employee's job duties change. The department should review the requirement for cellular services annually and make appropriate adjustments.

Salary supplements can ONLY be paid from State, Designated and Unrestricted Gift Accounts.

The supplement is not an employee benefit. It is intended to offset the cost of business use of a personal cellular communication services. The requirement for cellular services is tied to the position duties not the employee.

The department is not required to retain records of business use of personal cellular communication services under this plan. The employee is not required to provide service detail on monthly bills. However, the department may request information regarding the frequency and purpose of business related services to verify the need for the supplement.

B. University Provided Cellular Communication Service

Telecommunication Services manages cellular service contracts for the UTHSC-H with major providers. These contracts provide attractive rates, are actively managed and centrally paid.

(These companies may also provide special rates to UTHSC-H employees.) Departments are required to use institutional cellular contracts if departmental funds are to be used to pay for cellular services.

Departments can, with proper authorization, acquire an institutionally funded cellular phone. Charges for equipment purchases and installation, if required, are paid by the receiving department, directly to the provider using either the Procurement Card or on a non-PO voucher. Institutionally funded cellular telephones are the property of the UTHSC-H and are provided solely for UTHSC-H business use. Personal use of a UTHSC-H owned cellular phone is highly discouraged. Should personal calls be placed or received the UTHSC-H must be reimbursed as described below.

Restrictions

UTHSC-H departments may use grant funds to purchase and operate cellular communication services that are explicitly approved by the granting agency for payment from grant funds. (*Cellular phones cannot generally be paid from grant funds because they are considered overhead/indirect costs rather than a direct cost. In order for grant funds to be used to pay for cell phone usage as a direct cost, there has to be documentation reflecting that all the calls that were paid for were related to achieving the grant's purpose.*)

UTHSC-H departments may use departmental funds to purchase and operate cellular phones that are:

- ⊕ shared among department staff, as with a 'hot' phone, or
- ⊕ affixed to UTHSC-H property, such as cars and buildings.

Cellular phones that are routinely carried by one individual should be personally owned and the employee should receive a salary supplement for business use.

UTHSC-H departments may **not** use departmental funds to purchase and/or operate BlackBerry, or similar, devices.

Process

Telecommunication Services can advise departments on cellular services and equipment. If a department is interested in purchasing a cellular telephone or services through the UTHSC-H:

1. The departmental administrator must either:
 - a. Obtain the 'MOU – University Owned Phones' form and instructions from Telecommunication Services (<http://is.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/telecom/>), or
 - b. Obtain the 'MOU – Grant or Contract' form and instructions from Telecommunication Services (<http://is.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/telecom/>).
2. The department head or Principal Investigator (PI) must sign the memorandum or form (1.a or 1.b above), acknowledging that s/he understands and accepts that s/he is personally responsible for the cellular phone should it be lost, stolen, or damaged, and that s/he agrees to pay for any telecommunications charges incurred for non-university-business use of the cellular telephone.
3. This document, along with a screen print of the approved Purchase Order for payment of the monthly charges is forwarded to Telecommunication Services.
4. Telecommunication Services will complete the acquisition process and arrange for the delivery of the cellular phone to the user.

Telecommunication Services will provide each departmental 'buyer' (as defined in FMS) with all departmental cellular phone billing statements for that department on a monthly basis. The departmental buyer is responsible for distributing the statement to each cellular phone user to review all incoming/outgoing calls. The department head or PI must sign the billing statement and:

- Confirm that all calls made/received were directly related to UTHSC-H business or the purpose of the grant/project, or
- Identify all personal calls and attach a check, or checks, reimbursing the UTHSC-H for personal use as described below.

It is the responsibility of each department head or PI to ensure that cellular phone users comply with this requirement. If calls on the billing statement are identified as not being grant related, the department head or PI is responsible for making sure that the necessary steps are taken so that the expense is not charge to the grant.

Reimbursing UTHSC-H for Personal Use of University Provided Cellular Communication Service

If any calls on the monthly bill for departmental cellular phones were not for UTHSC-H business, those calls must be clearly marked as personal on the bill. The user is responsible for reimbursing their department for all personal calls. The amount due to the department is the total number of minutes for all personal calls multiplied by a per minute rate of \$0.25. (The per minute rate used in this calculation is set by Telecommunication Services.)

Since university funds cannot be used to purchase and/or operate a cellular data communication service, there is no procedure for reimbursing the university for personal usage of university paid cellular data communication service.

After calculating charges owed, the cellular user should return the bill with payment to the departmental administrator. The departmental administrator must ensure that any

personal payment is delivered to an UTHSC-H Cashier's Office for inclusion in the next daily deposit. Personal payment(s) must be deposited back into the Fund Source identified in the chart field from which the cellular bill was paid. To facilitate tracking and reporting on an institution-wide basis, all cellular telephone 'personal use' reimbursements should be coded to 67516.

C. Reimbursement for Business Use of Personal Cellular Communication Services

UTHSC-H employees should not use personal cellular communication services for state business with the expectation that they will be reimbursed for such use.

Business use of a personal cellular phone may be reimbursed, but only if:

- written justification and documentation (a copy of the cellular service bill, including call detail) is provided to the department head and
- the department head approves the request for reimbursement.

The amount due to the employee is the total number of minutes for all business related calls multiplied by a per minute rate of \$0.25.

Telecommunication Services can assist the department in the verification of the calculation.

Business use of personal cellular data communication services

- cannot be reimbursed due to the inability to accurately calculate or verify the portion of the service invoice attributable to business.

Additional Departmental Responsibilities

Department cellular service administrators must seek proper authorization in accordance with school, or unit, policy prior to contacting Telecommunications Services to initiate service.

Internal Service Department Requests (POs) must be entered into FMS and an approved PO must be created by the end of September of each fiscal year. Cellular service is billed monthly. The PO must be kept adequately funded throughout the year. Lack of an approved PO or an inadequately funded PO (funded for fewer than six months) could result in the loss of cellular service.

Departments are responsible for distributing the cellular service monthly statements and obtaining signatures. Cellular service statements and related documentation must be retained by the departments for three years following the fiscal year end (or, termination of the grant or project) in accordance with the UTHSC-H Records Retention Policy. Departmental cellular service billing records are public information. Personal cellular service bills provided as documentation for a reimbursement request are also public information.

The Telecommunication Services website can be accessed at:

<http://is.hsc.uth.tmc.edu/telecom/>

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