

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL

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Date Authorized: 01/12/2009
Supersedes: 08/19/2008
09/14/2004

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION SERVICES POLICY, GUIDELINES, AND PROCEDURES

REFERENCE

Form W.1.1 "Wireless Communication Agreement"
Form W.1.2 "Wireless Communication Service Request"
Form W.1.3 "Wireless Communication Device Daily Use Log"

BACKGROUND

On March 17, 2009, the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court revised the Cellular Telephone Policy, Guidelines, and Procedures. This Wireless Communication Services Policy, Guidelines, and Procedures supersede the Cellular Telephone Policy, Guidelines, and Procedures approved on September 14, 2004, revised August 19, 2008. The wireless communication services policies, guidelines, and procedures set forth below are applicable to Hidalgo County Officials (elected or appointed), Department Heads and employees.

Hidalgo County recognizes the need for certain County personnel to use cellular phones to complete and enhance their job performance. This policy establishes the procedures for cellular telephone authorization and use.

Officials and department heads who determine that one or more of their employees require cellular telephone service in order to properly perform their work duties are provided the following two options, each having specific criteria:

Officials and department heads may request a cellular telephone(s) for use by their employees during normal working hours.

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Employees of Hidalgo County whose duties may include the need for cellular telephone services can obtain cellular telephone services in one of the following manners:

Option	General Description	Section
County Owned Cellular Telephone Assigned to department:	Cellular telephone owned by Hidalgo County and managed by the department used exclusively for County business.	2.00

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

1.00 WIRELESS COMMUNICATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

1.01 Wireless Communication Services Administrator: The Chief Information Officer shall serve as the Wireless Communication Services Administrator. The Wireless Communication Services Administrator shall be assigned responsibility for administering the countywide Wireless Communication Services Program. The Wireless Communication Services Administrator's responsibilities include the following:

1. Reviews requests for cellular telephone service from Officials/Department Heads and request approval for the issuance of cellular telephone service from Commissioner's Court;
2. Maintain a master list of all authorized wireless communication devices. The master list should include, but is not limited to, the following information:

For departments issued a wireless device:

- a. Department name;
- b. Department's budget/expense account number;
- c. Wireless device telephone number;
- d. Wireless device model number;
- e. Wireless device serial number;
- f. Plan type (e.g. Business Essentials 1000) and cost;
- g. Status of cellular telephone (i.e., active or inactive); and
- h. Commissioners' Court approval date.
- i. Provides departments with a list of authorized wireless devices on a quarterly basis.

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3. Maintain contact information for the County's authorized wireless device service representative;
 4. Receives County owned cellular phones from the County's authorized wireless device service provider and issues cellular phones to Officials/Department Heads;
 5. Settle wireless device invoice disputes with the County's' authorized wireless device service representative for County owned devices and service plans;
 6. Reviews the Wireless Communication Services Policy at least annually and presents recommendations for improvement to Commissioners' Court for approval; and
 7. Is responsible for other duties as outlined by this policy.
- 1.02 Officials/Department Heads shall be responsible for administering the Wireless Communication Services Program for their respective office/department. Duties may be assigned to a designee, however ultimate responsibility for the administration of the Program remains with the Officials/Department Heads. Officials/Department Heads responsibilities include:
1. Receives training upon requesting wireless communication services and annually thenceforth regarding administration of the program and responsibilities from the Wireless Communication Services Administrator;
 2. Determine the potential need for an employee to utilize a cellular phone for County business;
 3. Submits requests for wireless communication services to the Wireless Communication Services Administrator;
 4. Distributes wireless communication devices to the Users if departmental or employee assigned wireless communication devices are approved;
 5. Document on **Form W.1.4 "Wireless Communication Device Daily Use Log"** the date the cellular phone was released/returned and the name of the authorized user that was provided with a County owned wireless communication device;
 6. Reviews cellular phone service invoices in detail on a monthly basis to ensure that calls are appropriate and made in accordance with this policy for departmental assigned cellular phones;
 7. Reviews departmental assigned cellular phone statements and recommends approval of payment;
 8. Ensures cellular phones are stored in a secure location while not in use; and
 9. Is responsible for other duties as outlined by this policy.

3.00 HIDALGO COUNTY OWNED DEVICES ASSIGNED TO THE DEPARTMENT

- 3.01 There are some circumstances where a "departmentally assigned wireless communication device" (e.g. cellular phones, data cards, GPS devices) may be provided by the County that is assigned to the Department. In these cases, the County will provide wireless communication

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service and equipment. Departments may qualify for wireless communication service only if the Officials/Department Heads has determined it to be required for the department's performance and the following must be true:

1. The anticipated level of business use is significant; and
2. The related cost is justified when compared with alternative communication choices; and
3. Employees are frequently away from access to traditional land-based phone services; or
4. Employees work requires substantial travel.

3.02 Eligibility based on these requirements must be documented by the Officials/Department Heads on **Form C.1.2 "Wireless Communication Service Request"** form. Justification of need must be specified as to why other means of communication provided by the County (i.e. office phones, email, etc.) are not adequate to meet the communications requirements of the employee's job.

3.03 Guidelines for Hidalgo County Owned Cellular Telephones

1. Hidalgo County owned cellular telephones are to be used for County business only. Personal use of County owned cellular phones, other than de minimus use, is a clear violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary actions.
2. Appropriate use – the employee agrees to use the cellular telephone in ways consistent with County policy and all applicable local, state, or federal laws. Inappropriate and unlawful use of cellular telephone features is prohibited.
3. Use of a cellular telephone while operating a vehicle – cellular telephones users must be aware of state and municipal laws regarding the use of phones while driving. The laws vary widely by location. In addition, use of cellular telephones while driving can cause hazardous distraction, especially in adverse weather, heavy traffic, or limited visibility conditions; and
4. Institutional data on Hidalgo County owned cellular telephones – many smartphones have advanced capabilities close to mobile/portable computers. As the devices become more widely deployed, the amount and level of institutional data that is stored may also increase.
 - a. Do not store County confidential, or sensitive personal information on a personal cellular phone or mobile device. The risk is too great that the device can be lost and/or compromised. Confidential and sensitive personal data should always be left and maintained on central systems and servers.
 - b. Do not transmit County confidential, or sensitive personal information through insecure channels such as email.
 - c. Always protect the device with a password or PIN to prevent casual access.
5. Cellular phones that are assigned specifically to individuals are subject to IRS regulations and may be taxed accordingly. For more information consult:
<http://www.irs.gov/govt/fslg/article/0,,id=167154,00.html>, **EXAMPLE 2**.
 - a. Some of these devices have the capability to be remotely wiped/re-formatted. These features should always be setup and configured.

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- b. Avoid or limit the amount of institutional data that is stored on your device.
 - c. Certain legal and regulatory requirements may necessitate that the County review and preserve relevant data that is stored on a Hidalgo County owned device.
6. Use of additional services, including long distance, directory assistance, direct connect charges, text messaging, data and third party services, and equipment insurance protection not included in the rate plans approved by Commissioners' Court is prohibited. Employees may be held personally liable if these types of charges are incurred. In addition, reimbursement to the County Treasurer's Office must be immediately made.

3.04 Obtaining a County Owned Wireless Communication Device

1. The Officials/Department Heads shall make requests to the Wireless Communication Services Administrator for wireless communication services using **Form W.1.2 or W.1.3 "Wireless Communication Service Request"** form.
2. The Wireless Communication Services Manager must fill out **Form W.1.2 or W.1.3 "Wireless Communication Service Request"** form with the following information:
 - a. Department name;
 - b. Department's budget/expense account number;
 - c. Wireless communication service type;
 - d. Estimated amount of business use per month (in minutes);
 - e. Number of wireless communication devices needed;
 - f. Justification for wireless communication service; and
 - g. Officials/Department Heads signature.
3. The Wireless Communication Services Administrator will submit the request to Commissioners Court with a recommendation.
4. Request for wireless communication services submitted by departments under Commissioners' Court must first be approved by the Commissioners' Court Executive Officer before being submitted to Commissioners' Court for approval.
5. The Wireless Communication Services Administrator shall obtain approval from Commissioners Court before authorizing wireless communication services.
6. Once approval is obtained, the department must prepare a purchase order for the full amount of the equipment and yearly service.
7. The purchase order should then be forwarded to the Information Technology Department for ordering of the equipment and service plan.
8. Once the cellular phone is received by the I.T. Department, the Officials/Department Heads must sign **Form W.1.1 "Wireless Communication Agreement"**.
9. The cellular phone is assigned to the department.

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3.05 Departmental Responsibilities

1. The department must maintain **Form W.1.4 "Wireless Communication Daily Use Log" (the "log")** for each wireless communication device that is issued directly to the department and not an individual. The log should include the following:
 - a. The name and employee number of the employee who was issued wireless communication device;
 - b. The reason why the wireless communication device was issued to the employee;
 - c. The time the wireless communication device was issued out; and
 - d. The time the wireless communication device was returned;
2. Ensures wireless communication devices are stored in a secure location while not in use; and
3. The department must periodically review the number and frequency of use of each wireless communication device to assess whether changes should be considered.

3.06 Payment and Reconciliation

1. Upon receipt of a wireless communication services provider billing statement, the Wireless Communication Services Administrator will upload invoices to the intranet for review by Officials/Department Heads, and employees.
2. Officials/Department Heads and employees will review the billing statements and immediately notify the Wireless Communication Services Administrator of billing errors, if any, via email. The Wireless Communications Services Administrator will proceed to process the departmental statements automatically UNLESS the individual departments raise a specific issue.
3. Officials/Department Heads will verify that required information is entered on the **Form W.1.4 "Wireless Communication Daily Use Log"** by department users.
4. Officials/Department Heads will verify that personal use, if any, of a cellular telephone is kept to *de minimus* use.
5. Officials/Department Heads will ensure that a purchase order has been requested for the estimated amount of wireless communication service charges for the remainder of the year.
6. Wireless Communication Services Administrator will review invoices on a monthly basis to ensure:
 - a. **Form W.1.2 or Form W.1.3 "Wireless Communication Service Request"** form is on file for each wireless device listed on the invoice;
 - b. Wireless devices and rate plans invoiced have been approved by Commissioners' Court;
 - c. Charges for additional services (long distance, directory assistance, direct connect charges, text messaging and third party services, and equipment

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insurance protection) not included in the rate plans approved by Commissioners' Court are included in the invoices;

- d. Sufficient funds exist in the applicable purchase orders for payment of the invoice.
7. Wireless Communication Services Administrator will communicate billing errors of inaccuracies immediately to the wireless services provider to ensure prompt resolution.
8. Wireless Communication Services Administrator and Officials/Department Heads will make every effort to ensure balances are paid in full each month (other than disputed charges).
9. Verification and reconciliation of invoices must be completed within 5 work days of receiving the invoice. Reconciled invoices shall then be forwarded to the County Auditor's Accounts Payable Section for payment by the time prescribed.

4.00 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR POLICY NON-COMPLIANCE

4.01 Non-compliance of the Wireless Communication Services Policy may result in the following disciplinary actions:

1. Cellular phone services privileges taken from employees;
2. Reimbursement to Hidalgo County for unauthorized use of a County issued cellular telephone;
3. Employee dismissal; or
4. Other disciplinary action at the Officials/Department Heads discretion.