
TITLE: Cell Phone/Smart Device Service Plan Allowances
NUMBER 738 (formerly 427)
APPROVED BY PRESIDENT 09/17/2012

Introduction and Purpose

The use of cell phones/smart devices can offer convenience and efficiency for Whatcom Community College employees having legitimate business needs for this technology.

The definition of cell phone/smart device includes simple cell phones as well as cell phones with capabilities to send and receive data.

When official business cannot be accommodated by the use of a landline telephone, pager, or other communication device, use of a cell phone/smart device may be required to perform Whatcom Community College business functions. In such circumstances, college vice presidents determine the business communication needs of employees.

Qualified Devices

This procedure applies only to cell phones/smart devices used for voice and data communication. Wireless devices used exclusively for text, data, or email communications that are not equipped with phone capabilities are not addressed by this procedure.

Allowances

Based Upon Job Functions

The cell phone/smart phone service plan allowance must be justified by business requirements. The allowance is not based on a particular title, position or seniority. Approval of the allowance is based on the business needs of the organization for communication continuity based on employees' frequency of travel and need for remote data access. In general, an allowance may be authorized if at least one of the following two criteria is met:

- The job function of the employee requires considerable time outside of their assigned office or work area and it is important to the College that they are accessible during those times.
- The job function of the employee requires them to be accessible outside of the scheduled or normal working hours.

Not an Entitlement

Whatcom Community College does not consider the allowance to be an entitlement of employment. The allowance is not part of an employee's base salary, and may be changed and/or withdrawn by Whatcom Community College at any time.

Monthly Allowance

There are two tiers for monthly cell phone/smart device service plan allowances:

- Tier 1: Allowance towards voice and text functions
- Tier 2: Allowance towards, voice, text and data functions

Approval

The cell phone/smart device service plan allowance must be directly linked to the employee's official duties and responsibilities. The allowance requires the recommendation of the direct supervisor and approval by the President or designee.

Approval Documentation

The employee, supervisor and respective vice president must complete and sign the **Cell Phone/Smart Device Service Plan Allowance Agreement** form that includes justification for the business need for a cell phone/smart phone allowance. Completed forms are submitted to the Office of Administrative Services.

Service Plan Selection

The employee is responsible for the selection of and enrollment in an appropriate service plan, however, the plan must, at minimum, address the requirements identified by the supervisor. An employee may purchase any cell phone/smart phone or service plan that meets the requirements regardless of price. However, the employee is responsible for any additional expenses above the allowance approved by the institution.

Notification to College

An employee receiving the allowance must make their phone number available to college employees and constituents for the purpose of contacting the employee.

Employee Responsibility

The employee is personally responsible for complying with any contract entered into with a service provider, including payment of all expenses incurred, e.g., long distance, roaming fees, taxes, deactivation fees, etc. In the event that an employee leaves the position, he or she continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the service plan.

Because the cell phone/smart device is owned by the employee, with the exception of college-owned issued cell phones (refer to "College-Owned Cell Phones" section), it may be used for personal as well as business use, but must be available for the performance of responsibilities. In general, this means that the cell phone/smart device must be in possession of the employee and turned on to receive phone calls, access voice mail, and if applicable send and receive electronic mail. Specific details related to availability outside of normal business hours will be left to the employee and respective supervisor based on the unique circumstances of the job.

Review

It is the supervisor's responsibility to identify cell phone/smart device needs in his or her department or division at least annually in order to determine whether monthly allowance amounts should be maintained, changed or discontinued.

The employee must provide, when requested by his or her supervisor, a monthly bill that includes total taxes and fees paid by the employee for the service. The employee may be asked to indicate on the bill which calls are business related in order to assess the amount of business and personal use. If monthly bills do not support the need for the allowance, the allowance may be discontinued.

College-Owned Cell Phones

In certain circumstances, the College may choose to provide cell phones to employees who, by nature of their job responsibilities, need to be on call at all times. In these instances, the College is considered the sole owner of all equipment and has sole responsibility for payment of invoices associated with each cellular phone number.

Employees who are issued college-owned cell phones are generally prohibited from using these phones for personal use; however, infrequent or occasional personal use that results in little or no actual cost to the state is allowed.

Records Retention

For employee-owned cell phones/smart devices, copies of the approval forms/agreements used to process allowances (as well as receipts, bills or other documentation of use as requested by the employee's supervisor) are retained by the Office of Administrative Services or designee for six years after the end of the current fiscal year. Users of cell phones/smart devices should be aware that such records are subject to state of Washington public disclosure statutes. Documentation will be retained for internal or external audit purposes.

Use While Driving

Whatcom Community College drivers are to observe the requirements of any applicable laws or ordinances regarding cell phone/smart device use while driving. According to RCW 46.61.667 "a person operating a moving motor vehicle while holding a wireless communications device to his or her ear is guilty of a traffic infraction".