

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Wireless Communications Devices

Policy Number: 204.09

Effective Date: 03/02/2023

Page Number: 1 of 3

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Facilities Division

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

This procedure explains the authorizations of wireless communication devices inside any Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) facility and supports searches of facilities and offenders to control contraband and its disposition. The GDC reserves the right to investigate, retrieve and read any communication or data stored on its respective servers, and that which is composed, transmitted or received through voice services and online connections.

II. Authority:

A. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 104.47 Employee Standards of Conduct, 105.04 Telecommunications Policy Statement, 203.03 Incident Reporting, 205.07 Post Orders, 206.02 Management of Offender Property or Contraband, 215.03 Transitional Center Post Orders, 215.23 Transitional Center Resident Cell Phones, and 226.02 Entry Security Procedures.

III. Definitions:

A. Wireless Communication Devices that may be prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **Cellular Phone** - A phone that permits wireless communication;
2. **Smart Phone** - Cell phone that can handle data in addition to voice calls. It often allows users to browse the internet;
3. **PDA With Wireless Access** - Handheld device that combines computing, telephone/fax, Internet, and networking features;
4. **Pager** - Small personal radio receiver that gives indication when a radio signal is received;
5. **Text Messaging Device** - Device capable of sending and receiving text message to similar devices, cellular telephones, or Pagers;

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6. **Commercial Frequency Two-way Radios** - Digital radios operating on frequencies assigned to companies such as Southern LINC and Nextel. These radios may have cell phone capability. They differ from radios that operate on public safety frequencies; and
7. **Watches with Internet Access** - Watches that allows the user to connect to a server to provide any range of internet access.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

- A. Only State-owned wireless devices or GDC approved devices that are assigned to staff should be allowed inside the facility. Cell phones allowed for Transitional Center Residents are addressed in SOP 215.23, Resident Cell Phones. At the first security Checkpoint, the employee shall disclose to facility staff the type(s) of device(s) he/she is bringing into the facility. Facility staff will examine each wireless device to ensure the validity of the device.
 1. Once the device is examined the facility staff conducting the first security check shall complete the Wireless Device Tracking Sheet (Attachment 1) and secure it to the staff member's locator card or picture ID.
 2. When the staff member exits the facility, the device and the information on Attachment 1 shall be examined to ensure that the device that is being taken out of the facility is the same device that entered the facility. The facility staff, at the first Checkpoint where the phone was originally examined, is responsible for ensuring this.
 3. Facility staff assigned the device is responsible for maintaining the accountability of his/her wireless device(s) at all times while inside the facility.
- B. At no time, shall any "personal" wireless device(s), be allowed inside any GDC facility without prior approval of the Appointing Authority. The only exceptions will be in the following cases: Health Service Administrator (HSA), Physicians,

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Psychiatrists, and/or Psychologists are authorized to bring personal cell phones into the institution with prior written approval from the Appointing Authority.

1. The Appointing Authority shall maintain a copy of the written authorization. Vendors/Contractors employed by other entities such as AT&T, Dell, Building Maintenance Companies, and Emergency Services Personnel may need to bring non-state issued cell phones into the facility without prior approval of the Appointing Authority.
- C. All occurrences involving the detection or discovery of unauthorized/illegal wireless devices (i.e., cell phones, PDAs, etc.) must be entered into the Incident Reports application in Scribe.
1. This includes instances when wireless devices can be tied or linked to a specific offender(s) as well as when wireless devices cannot be tied or linked to an offender, such as wireless devices found in common areas within the facility.
 2. Finally, the number of these wireless devices must be entered into the summary section of the Incident Reports application. Any phones confiscated and deemed contraband shall be disposed of in accordance with SOP 206.02 Management of Offender Property and Contraband.
- D. This procedure does not restrict the responsibility of the Warden or Superintendent to prevent the introduction of contraband into the facility.

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Wireless Device Tracking Sheet

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Upon completion, Attachment 1 shall be maintained for one (1) year in the Deputy Warden of Security's Office.