

TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) to maintain a telephone system and to issue Department-owned cellular telephones to employees who need such devices to perform assigned duties as determined by the Chief of Police or their designee. All sworn and non-sworn OPD employees will be familiar with the OPD telephone system and will follow all listed procedures for both land line and cellular telephones. It is the policy of the OPD that employees will make every effort practical to avoid using cellular telephones while driving a City vehicle.

PROCEDURE:

I. General

A. OPD employees will answer City-owned land line telephones as follows:

1. All sworn OPD employees will answer the telephone by stating the following:
 - a. Name of the office or unit called.
 - b. The employee's rank.
 - c. The employee's last name.

EXAMPLE: "Homicide Unit, Sergeant Smith."

2. All non-sworn OPD employees will answer the telephone by stating the following:

- a. Name of the office or unit called.
- b. The employee's first or last name.

EXAMPLE: "Fraud Unit, Mary;" or "Fraud Unit, Ms. Smith."

EXCEPTION: Exceptions to the above procedures may be granted by a unit commander.

B. Department-issued cellular telephones will be answered in a professional manner at the discretion of the employee.

C. If OPD employees receive a call from a citizen who wishes to report a crime but has reached the wrong number, the OPD employee will:

1. Direct the citizen to contact the Telephone Report Squad (TRS) at 402-444-4877 if it is a non-emergency.

– OR –
2. In the case of an emergency, direct the caller to dial 9-1-1.

D. The OPD Phone Directory provides the telephone number(s) of OPD employees.

II. Long Distance Telephone Calls

- A. OPD employees will not make personal long distance telephone calls from a Department-issued cellular telephone or a City-owned land line except in the case of an emergency.
 - 1. The OPD reserves the right to discipline employees who use City-owned or issued telephones to make personal long distance telephone calls. Employees may also be required to reimburse the City of Omaha for personal long distance telephone calls.
- B. OPD employees are encouraged to be reasonable in the number and length of business-related long distance telephone calls made.

III. Conditions of Use for Department-Issued and Personal Cellular Telephones

- A. The OPD will issue cellular telephones to employees who need such devices to properly perform assigned duties as determined by the Chief of Police or their designee.
- B. The OPD will comply with the Mayoral Executive Order governing the issuance and usage of cellular telephones. The Mayoral Executive Order governing cellular telephones allows City Department Heads to allow certain deviations. The Chief of Police has authorized the following deviations from the Mayoral Executive Order:
 - 1. Officers are authorized to carry personal cellular telephones at their discretion, but personal usage while on-duty is restricted except in emergency situations.
 - a. In general, the use of any cellular device that may cause any employee to be neglectful or inattentive to duty is prohibited.
 - b. Use of personal cellular telephones for personal communication while on break and out of public view is not restricted.
 - c. In cases where circumstances require an employee to operate their personal cellular telephone for personal reasons, while performing work-duties, a supervisor may approve limited usage.
 - 2. Department-issued cellular telephones may be used in an employee's office to place calls to other City/County cellular telephones issued by the same carrier. Employees shall answer Department-issued cellular telephones while in their office.
 - 3. OPD employees will be expected to reimburse the City for any personal cellular telephone calls sent from or received on a City-owned cellular telephone if such personal calls result in an employee using more minutes than are allotted by the calling plan to which an employee is subject.
 - a. The City Finance Accountant assigned to the OPD will notify the Precinct/Section Captain when a cellular telephone plan exceeds the allotted minutes.
 - (1) The Precinct/Section Captain will determine if an employee's personal usage caused the overage and will notify the employee.
 - b. Notified employees will send a check, in the amount of the call(s), to the City Finance Accountant assigned to the OPD for the cost of the call(s). Reimbursement for personal calls will be made monthly.
 - 4. The OPD will comply with all remaining provisions of the Mayoral Executive Order (including sections governing the Purchase of Cellular Telephones, Usage of City-Owned Cellular Telephones, Monitoring of City-Owned Cellular Telephone Usage, Allowance-Based Personal Cellular Telephones, and Personal Cellular Telephones).

- a. OPD employees may access the Mayoral Executive Order "[Policy for the Issuance and Usage of Cellular Telephones](#)" for more details.
- C. OPD employees are allowed to carry Department-issued and personal cellular telephones during the performance of their duties. Due to the unique nature of police work and the authorization to carry and use personal cellular telephones, the following conditions will be followed:
 - 1. Any City-owned or personal cellular telephone carried by an OPD police employee must be carried in a secured and protected manner that will not allow unnecessary risk of exposure, damage, or loss during performance of the employee's normally assigned duties.
 - 2. Employees will, at all times, maintain sufficient competency and situational awareness to properly perform their duties and assume responsibilities of their positions.
 - 3. Employees will not place outgoing, nor answer incoming telephone calls, while actively engaged in Departmental business that requires face-to-face contact with any citizen, unless the telephone call is directly related to OPD business.
 - 4. Uniformed employees, while on-duty, acting in an official capacity and in public, will not wear any visible hands-free telephone devices unless authorized by a supervisor.
 - 5. Officers should remain cognizant of tactical situations they may encounter and consider placing cellular telephones into vibrate or silent mode while on duty.
 - 6. Photographs or recordings made by officers in execution of official duties, especially those obtained in the course of criminal investigations, may be considered evidence, are OPD property, and should be treated as such.
 - a. Officers will not disseminate such records or media frivolously or inappropriately to others for any non-police-related reasons.
 - 7. All cellular telephone calls, text messages, emails, and other communications made to conduct OPD business (even with personal telephones) may be subject to discovery in criminal or civil matters or may be used in internal investigations.
 - a. Employees should consider these communications a public record and should have no expectation of privacy.
 - 8. Employees are to limit the usage of Department-issued cellular telephone calls to OPD business calls only. Personally owned cellular telephones should be used for any necessary personal calls.
 - a. "Business calls" may include the notification of family or others affected by changes in work scheduling requiring the employee to work beyond normal work or shift hours.

EXCEPTION: Exceptions to the above procedure may be granted by a section commander.

- 9. City-owned cellular telephones shall not be used for the purpose of creating personal financial gain.

10. Discretion will be employed in the use of City-owned cellular telephones both on and off duty. City-owned cellular telephones should not be used in the office or where land lines are readily available, unless contacting another City/County cellular telephone issued by the same carrier.

D. Usage of Cellular Telephones in Police Vehicles.

1. OPD employees will make every effort practical to avoid using cellular telephones while driving a City vehicle.
2. OPD employees will, at all times, maintain sufficient competency and situational awareness to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions. When job-related circumstances dictate the use of cellular telephones while driving any police vehicle, employees must remain attentive to their environment and their duty to drive safely.
3. Cellular telephones may be used for police-related purposes when necessary, but they are not a replacement for, and should not be used in lieu of, the police radio. The police radio should be used as the primary means of voice communication while operating any equipped cruiser, unless circumstances dictate that it is impractical to do so.
 - a. Because of the distractions inherent to dialing or otherwise using any handheld cellular device, employees should use great discretion when operating both a vehicle and cellular telephone at the same time.
 - b. Simultaneous operation of a vehicle and cellular telephones should be limited to situations where it is impractical or unsafe to pull over and stop before initiating or continuing any conversation.

NOTE: Officers should make every effort to minimize the duration of calls made or received while driving a City vehicle.

4. The use of any cellular device for non-emergency, personal reasons, while operating a City-owned vehicle, is prohibited.
5. Employees are prohibited from texting on any handheld cellular device while driving.
6. Officers are prohibited from operating any handheld cellular device while operating a moving police motorcycle.
7. Officers are encouraged to utilize the telephone's hands-free speaker phone to converse when the situation allows.

- E. The above procedures apply to use of personal cellular devices while on-duty and City-issued telephones both on- and off-duty. These procedures do not apply to officers actively engaged in an undercover capacity when such limitations may be impractical.

IV. Additions, Changes, and Deletions to Telephone System Services

- A. OPD employees who request additions, changes, or deletions to telephone system services will submit a request on an Inter-office Communication via the chain of command to the Fleet and Facilities Coordinator.
1. The Fleet and Facilities Coordinator will research the service requested to obtain an estimated cost.

2. This estimate will then be submitted to the Support Services Section Captain for approval.
3. If approved, the Fleet and Facilities Coordinator will forward the necessary documentation to the Dot.Comm Service Desk. (See [Appendix A](#) for telephone number and email address).

V. Repairs

- A. The Fleet and Facilities Unit is responsible for all telephone line installation and/or repair.
- B. There will be no emergency notification by the Fleet and Facilities Coordinator, unless an entire system is down.
- C. To report a needed telephone line repair, OPD employees will contact the Fleet and Facilities Coordinator (See [Appendix A](#) for telephone number) between the hours of 0600 to 1600 hours, Monday through Friday. Employees may also contact the Fleet and Facilities Coordinator outside of these hours, if an emergency exists.

REFERENCES:

I. Nebraska Revised Statutes (NRS)

- A. NRS [60-6,179.01](#) is relevant to this policy.

II. Mayoral Executive Orders

- A. The Mayoral Executive Order [#S-4-13](#), "Policy for the Issuance and Usage of Cellular Telephones" is relevant to this policy.

III. Previous OPD Orders

- A. Previous OPD General Orders include the following: #77-02, 17-03, 16-09, 17-09, 18-09, 31-14, and 35-15.

IV. Accreditation Standards

- A. CALEA Accreditation standards 22.2.7 and 81.2.10 are relevant to this policy.

V. Other

- A. PPM Monthly Updates: #3-2020.