


Department of Public Safety Policies and Procedures

<u>Title</u> Personal Communication Devices	<u>SOP Number</u> 11.3.200
Approval Signature 	
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Personal Communication Devices

I. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of mobile telephones and other communication devices, whether department-issued or personally owned, when used while on-duty or for authorized work-related purposes.

II. Policy:

The University of Cincinnati Department of Public Safety permits employees to utilize department-issued Personal Communication Devices (PCDs) and to carry personally owned PCDs in the workplace, subject to the limitations outlined in this policy.

For purposes of this policy, Personal Communication Device (PCD) includes mobile telephones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), tablets, and other wireless two-way communication or portable internet-access devices. PCD use includes, but is not limited to:

- Voice calls
- Text messaging
- Email communication
- Internet access
- Social media activity
- Video or photographic functions
- Applications and other data services

Improper use of a PCD while on-duty may compromise employee safety, interfere with job performance, or negatively impact public confidence.

Employees are also advised that communications related to department business conducted on personally owned PCDs may be subject to civil or criminal discovery and public records disclosure under applicable law.

Employees who have questions regarding this policy should seek guidance from a supervisor.

III. Privacy and Monitoring:

Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in communications made, received, or stored on department-issued PCDs.

Department-issued devices, associated accounts, and related records may be monitored or inspected by the Department at any time, without prior notice.

If department equipment, networks, or services are used to access personal or password-protected accounts, those communications may also be subject to monitoring or inspection.

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Supervisors are authorized to conduct administrative reviews of electronic files stored on department-issued PCDs when necessary for legitimate departmental purposes.

If department-issued devices contain location tracking capabilities, employees shall have no expectation of privacy regarding device location information.

IV. Procedure:

A. Departmental - Issued PCDs

1. The Department may issue a PCD when operational needs or job duties require mobile communication capabilities.
2. Department-issued devices and assigned telephone numbers remain the property of the Department.
3. Department-issued PCDs may be inspected, monitored, or audited at any time without prior notice.

B. Personally Owned PCD Stipend

1. Employees whose duties require routine work-related cell phone use may be eligible for a stipend to offset business-related costs associated with personally owned devices.
 - a. Stipend eligibility and amounts will be determined based on job responsibilities and operational need.
 - b. Employees receiving a stipend must comply with [University of Cincinnati Policy 2.1.7 – Wireless Communication Stipend](#).
2. Employees receiving a stipend are responsible for:
 - a. Purchasing and maintaining their own cellular device and service plan
 - b. Selecting a service provider and a plan appropriate to job requirements
 - c. Maintaining active service during the stipend period
 - d. Promptly reporting changes to their phone number or service plan
 - e. Reporting lost or stolen devices
3. Stipend levels may include:
 - a. Plan 1 – Limited business use
 - b. Plan 2 – Moderate business use
4. Stipend justification may include:
 - a. Need for availability outside normal working hours
 - b. Responsibility for critical infrastructure or emergency response
 - c. Frequent travel requiring communication or access to information systems
 - d. Operational efficiency gained through mobile communication access
5. Requests for a stipend must be submitted using the [Department of Public Safety Wireless Communication Stipend Agreement Form](#).
6. Final approval for stipends rests with the Director of Public Safety.

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7. The HR Central Office will conduct annual audits to ensure stipends remain appropriate and compliant with this policy.

C. Personally owned PCD

1. Employees may carry a personally owned PCD while on-duty subject to the following conditions:
2. Carrying a personally owned PCD is a privilege, not a right.
3. The Department assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to personally owned devices except as provided in applicable labor agreements.
4. Employees shall notify the Department if their personally owned PCD used for work purposes is lost or stolen.
5. Personally owned devices must be purchased and maintained at the employee's expense.
6. Personally owned PCDs should not be used for work-related communication except in exigent circumstances, such as when radio communications are unavailable.
7. Employees have a reduced expectation of privacy when personally owned PCDs are used for department-related communications.
8. Except for exigent circumstances, personally owned PCDs should be used out of public view.
9. Personally owned PCDs shall not be used to record or transmit department-related information, photographs, audio, or video without authorization from the Chief of Police or designee.

D. General Use of PCDs

1. The following guidelines apply to all PCDs used while on-duty or for department business:
2. PCDs shall not be carried in a visible manner while in uniform unless placed in an approved carrier.
3. Personal use should be limited to brief and necessary communications and should generally occur during break periods.
4. Access to social media sites is restricted to official department business except during authorized breaks.
5. Except in exigent circumstances, PCDs should be used out of public view.
6. PCDs may be used to communicate with other personnel when radio use is impractical; however, they shall not replace standard radio communications.
7. Recording audio, video, or photographs related to department operations is prohibited unless directly related to official duties and properly authorized.
8. Employees should not provide their personal phone numbers to victims, suspects, or witnesses. Requests for service should be directed through the

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Emergency Communications Center.

9. Use of PCDs to harass, threaten, coerce, or engage in inappropriate conduct is strictly prohibited.

E. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. Supervisors shall ensure personnel under their command:
 - a. Understand and comply with this policy
 - b. Receive appropriate training on PCD use
 - c. Use PCDs in a manner consistent with employee safety and department standards
 - d. Supervisors shall take prompt corrective action when improper PCD use is observed or reported.

F. Use While Driving

1. Employees shall not write, send, or read text messages while operating a University vehicle.
2. Use of PCDs while driving should be limited to urgent matters. When practical, employees should stop the vehicle in a safe location before using a PCD.
3. These requirements are consistent with Ohio Revised Code §4511.204.

G. Official Use and CJIS Security

1. Employees are prohibited from using personally owned devices to access the Department's:
 2. Records Management System (RMS)
 3. Crime Analysis software
 4. This restriction is necessary to protect Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) data and maintain CJIS compliance.
 5. University-owned devices, including department-issued cellular phones and iPads, may access these systems when properly configured and authorized under applicable security policies.
 6. Personally owned devices may be used to capture and upload media through the Axon Capture feature when attaching evidence to a report. This exception does not authorize direct access to RMS or Crime Analysis systems from personally owned devices.
 7. Employees should remember that PCD communications may be intercepted or overheard. Sensitive information should be transmitted through secure department communication systems whenever possible.

References

University of Cincinnati Policy 2.1.7 Wireless Communication Stipend