

20.13 -- Communications and/or Computers -- Personal Use

Last updated July 2, 2008

A. General. It is the policy of the University of Idaho that the use of university owned communication devices and services purchased with university funds and owned by the university is for official university business. This policy applies to voice and data communication devices and services-see definitions below. Department heads and persons in equivalent positions are responsible for the business and financial operations of their unit, including the development and implementation of appropriate operating procedures and internal controls. Oversight of communication devices and services fall within that realm of responsibility. Department heads are responsible for ensuring accountability for and compliance with these policies and procedures.

B. Definitions.

B-1. Communication Devices and Services: This refers to any type of communication device or service, such as cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDA's), satellite phones, personal laptops, Blackberry devices, fax machines, two way radios, pagers, computers, and land line telephones or any other communication device. Services include but are not limited to email, text messaging, Internet access, cellular services, include local and long distance traditional telephone services, and network connectivity.

B-2. Personally Owned Communication Devices and Services. These are communication devices purchased with other than university funds (university funds include grant funds and gift funds) and owned by an individual. Common personally owned communication devices and services include cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDA's), computers, and Blackberries, with the related services of email, text messaging, Internet access, and cellular service.

B-3. University Owned Communication Devices and Services. These are communication devices purchased with university funds and owned by the university. These devices generally are used on campus and, subject to applicable use-policies, are to be used for university-related business. They are often connected to or dependent on the wired infrastructure or are located in university buildings. Common university owned devices and services include fax machines, two way radios, satellite phones, pagers, computers, and land line telephones, with the related services of local and long distance services, network connectivity, and email.

C. Policy. The university provides university owned communication devices and services that are necessary for conducting university business operations, research, and academic activities. The decision of which device(s) to provide is at the discretion of the appropriate division or department supervisor. Use of university owned communication devices must comply with Idaho law and university policies. In general, the university does not provide mobile communication devices. This includes cellular phones and Blackberry devices. University owned communications devices may not be used for commercial or profit-making purposes or political purposes, or for personal use where such use incurs a cost to the university and is not academically related.

D. Procedures.

D-1. Personally Owned Communication Devices and Services-Frequent Use for University Purposes. Employees whose job duties require the frequent use of mobile communication devices or communications services for university business will be given a taxable allowance to compensate for the business use of a personally-owned mobile communications device and/or service. Employees will be responsible for contracting for services, purchasing the equipment, and all payments of their personal contracts with their communication service provider.

D-2. Review of Use of Personally Owned Communication Devices and Services for University purposes:

D-2.a. Application for Allowance: In order for an employee to receive an allowance for the use of their communication device or service for university purposes, the employee must justify to their department head that there are business requirements that necessitate the frequent use of the device(s) to perform university business, and that such business cannot be accommodated by the use of university-owned communication devices and services. A completed and signed reimbursement allowance approval form will be kept in the employee's departmental personnel file. The approval form is located at:

<http://www.its.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=105166>

D-2.b. Setting the Amount of the Allowance: Once a year, employees will work with their supervisors to determine the appropriate amount of the allowance, based upon a representative sample of documented university device usage, service costs, or on other quantifiable, auditable criteria, such as usage comparisons with other employees of the same job class or duties. The agreed upon allowance amount will be included as a

taxable line item on the employee's paycheck. Documentation supporting the amount of the allowance shall be included in the employee's departmental personnel file. The allowance will be calculated for a twelve (12) month period after which time it will lapse. To continue the allowance for another twelve months the employee and supervisor must reevaluate the amount of the allowance and make adjustments as needed. This allowance is not an entitlement, nor is it an increase in pay. The university reserves the right to rescind this allowance at any time.

D-3. Personally Owned Communication Devices and Services - Infrequent Use for University Purposes. Employees who infrequently use their personally owned communication devices or services for university purposes may request reimbursement from the university for such use through the Accounts Payable Department.

D-4. Reimbursement for Use of Personally Owned Communication Devices or Services. Employees seeking reimbursement for use of personally owned communication devices or services pursuant to D-3, must submit their original invoices with itemized call detail and documentation substantiating university business use for departmental approval within two months of the usage. All reimbursement requests must occur during the same fiscal year as the usage occurred. Departments shall submit an approved claim voucher or if on travel status, the employee's travel expense claim form to Accounts Payable for reimbursement to the employee. For university calls made within a personal "prepaid minute plan", calculate reimbursement as follows: Divide the monthly cost of the plan by the number of minutes allowed then multiply that amount by the number of minutes used for university business calls. Documentation substantiating university business use must include the following:

- *The cost of the usage
- *The time of the usage
- *The purpose of the usage
- *The business relationship of the calling parties

D-5. University Owned Communication Devices and Services - Use. Telephones, fax machines, radios, computers, etc. are provided by the university to enable employees to perform critical business functions of the University of Idaho and support the role and mission. In no case will the university provide Internet connectivity or other data services for personally owned computers.

D-6. University Owned Mobile Communication Devices and Services - Cellular Phones. In general, the university will not own cellular phones

or other mobile communications devices or carry mobile communications device contracts for permanent assignment to individual employees. University departments, with the approval of the department head, may obtain a cellular phone or other mobile communication device to be associated with the department. These university owned communication devices shall have a department or functional listing in the university directory. A university department may assign a university owned mobile communication device to an employee when it is demonstrated that an employee cannot perform his or her duties without a cellular and/or wireless communication device or that improved performance ensuing from such communication will justify the investment.

D-7. Review of University-Owned Mobile Communication Device Charges. All university owned mobile communication device usage must be exclusively for university business, be managed and maintained by the department, involve no personal use, and be documented as follows (IRS Code 26 Section 274(d)):

- *The cost of the usage
- *The time of the usage
- *The purpose of the usage
- *The business relationship of the parties involved

Department heads are responsible for insuring that all usage is managed in accordance with IRS rules.

D-8. Personal Long-Distance Telephone, Calling Cards, or Fax Calls on University-Owned Communication Devices. Employees may not use university owned communication devices to make long-distance calls for personal or other non-university purposes. This prohibition includes using UI purchased calling cards for personal use. Long-distance calls other than those for official UI business are to be charged to home telephones, personal telephone calling cards, to the called party, or to another non-university source.

D-9. Review of Long-Distance Telephone Charges on University Owned Communication Devices. All long-distance telephone charges appearing on monthly university ITS Telephone Services billing statements require timely review. This includes analysis of monthly invoices and questioning of any personal or large and unusual charges. ITS Telephone Services departmental long-distance calling detail records are available on the web at: https://www.sites.uidaho.edu/dept_invoice/index.html

Inquiries related to questioned charges should be directed to Telephone

Services (208) 885-5800, on the web at:
<http://www.its.uidaho.edu/phones/> or via email at phones@uidaho.edu.
Charges identified as personal or otherwise unauthorized are to be reimbursed by the caller.

D-10. University Review (Audit) of Use of University Owned Communication Devices - Cell Phone and Long-Distance Charges. To ensure compliance with the IRS Accountable Plan Rules, university and Regents policies, each employee using a university-owned cell phone and/or using office long-distance call capability is subject to periodic review by the responsible department head and/or Accounts Payable or Auditing Services. This includes review of monthly invoices and questioning of any large or unusual charges. Corrective action must be taken when inappropriate use of cell phone service is identified, which includes mandatory reimbursement of inappropriate charges, and may also include termination of the cell phone contract and employee disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

D-11. Safety and Usage of Any Mobile Communication Device: Employees are responsible for operating vehicles and potentially hazardous equipment in a safe and prudent manner. Employees are strongly discouraged from using a cell phone or other mobile communication device while driving during working hours for any purpose. In an emergency situation, employees should pull over and stop the vehicle or use a hands free mobile communication device. Mobile communication device use is not allowed while driving university vehicles or while driving in jurisdictions where such use is prohibited by law.

D-12. Transition from University Owned Mobile Communication Devices and Services to Personally Owned Communication Devices and Services. As of the date of this policy, the university has determined that there is no surplus value in existing university owned mobile communication devices. For those employees who have provided justification to their supervisors for the use of such devices and services and who are currently using university owned devices and services, the department may elect to abandon those devices and turn over possession to the employee. This abandonment applies only to handheld mobile communication devices. It does not include laptops, notebook computers, etc. If you have a question about whether a particular device is included in this abandonment, please contact Purchasing Services (885-6116). Departments are encouraged to transition employees off of university owned service plans as soon as possible. All university owned mobile communication device use must be accounted for and documented as outlined herein.