




# **FIRE RESCUE**

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY**

## **STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

<b>Subject:</b>	Cell Phones
<b>Reference Number:</b>	SAP-DEP-046
<b>Effective Date:</b>	01 January 2012
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Signature of Approval:</b>	 <b>J. Dan Eggleston, Chief</b>

**Purpose:**

To establish a procedure for the issuance and use of departmental cellular phones.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all ACFR career personnel issued cell phones.

**Policy:**

1. Communications and availability of personnel are critical factors in Fire Rescue operations. It is the policy of this Department that designated personnel may have use of cellular phone service in the performance of their duties.
2. County owned cellular phones may be issued to selected individuals with all business related costs and expenses paid by the Department.
  - a. The issuance and use of phones is guided by both this policy and County Policy: Administrative Policy AP-3: Use of Technology Policy. Effective June 16, 2011, the Assistant County Executive waived the section of County Policy AP-3, Page 3, "No Personal Use" and permitted guidance on this issue through Department Policy.
3. Cellular phones are provided for the purpose of conducting County business both during working and non-working hours. Employees are permitted to make occasional personal use of County-issued cellular phones provided that the substantial majority of their use is for business purposes.
4. Authorization for issuance will be determined by the Fire Rescue Chief based on the following needs:
  - a. Need for frequent access to the individual;
  - b. A demonstrated efficiency improvement to the individual's activities with cellular use,
  - c. If it is a cost-effective measure.
5. If it is determined that a Fire Rescue employee should require use of a County cellular phone, the agency may offer one of the below options to an employee:
  - a. Issuance of a County-owned cellular phone
    - i. An Acknowledgment Form (Appendix A) will be signed by each employee upon receipt of a cellular phone.
    - ii. The purpose of this form is to have the employee acknowledge that the phone is County property subject to County policies and that the employee has no reasonable expectation of privacy in the phone, and that the employee's acceptance of the phone signifies his/her agreement to abide by all applicable policies.
  - b. Issuance of a County stipend to the employee to help cover business related costs on a personally owned cellular phone. The rates are determined by the County and are detailed in the County Policy: Administrative Policy AP-3: Use of Technology.
6. Quarterly random audits may be completed by the Fire Rescue Chief or his designee to ensure compliance with this policy.
7. **PERSONAL USE ON A COUNTY ISSUED CELLULAR PHONE**
  - a. The Fire Rescue Chief or his designee will determine a cap on cellular phone minutes per category of employee based on what would be a reasonable number of minutes required to effectively carry out their

responsibilities. For example, Battalion/Division Chiefs may receive 450 minutes per month and team members 340 minutes per month.

- b. The cap system on cellular phone minutes is based on the understanding that employees will be permitted to occasionally use the County-owned equipment for personal reasons provided that the substantial majority is for business purposes. The cap on minutes will be set to accommodate the cell phone's legitimate business purpose with only a small portion of the minutes allowed for a reasonable de minimis personal use.
  - c. If an employee exceeds their allocated minutes, the excess minutes are presumed to be for personal use and will be charged to the employee unless the employee identifies the personal calls and demonstrates that the business calls caused the overage.
  - d. The dollar amount an employee will be charged for exceeding this cap for personal use will be determined by what the agency would be charged per minute for exceeding the department's overall pool of minutes provided by the phone carrier.
  - e. Employees issued County smart cellular phones should keep their personal use of phone applications, texting, and internet use to a minimum. The standard used for these functions is the same as that used for personal phone calls, only a minimum of the phone's usage should be for any personal activity.
  - f. Employees issued County standard cellular phones are prohibited from using internet/applications and are limited to 300 text messages per month.
8. Audits will be conducted routinely on cellular phone usage. Appropriate action will be taken when necessary to remedy instances of misuse.
9. POLICY VIOLATIONS
- a. Disciplinary action, including suspension/revocation of cellular phone privileges, may be taken for any of the following reasons:
    - i. Failure to follow the County and Department policies on cellular phone use.
    - ii. Manipulating the phone in any manner as to hide incoming or outgoing phone numbers which are personal in nature.
    - iii. Misuse of the County phone that is inconsistent with the purposes for which it was issued.
    - iv. Failure to pay for personal use of minutes over the established cap.
    - v. Repeated instances of an employee exceeding the cap on minutes.
10. Attachments
- a. Employee Cellular Phone Equipment and Policy Acknowledgement