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# Personal Communication Devices

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Department: **Administration**  
Adopted: **January 13, 2015**

Policy No: **5.019**

## 1. Purpose

This procedure will provide a consistent guide for the management of mobile phones and similar communication devices.

## 2. Policy

The Town of Berwick provides personal communication devices for individuals undertaking business related activities. Mobile phone service plans need to be approved in town budgets, and need to be monitored by both supervisors and end users to ensure they meet the goals of providing support for business related activities at a reasonable cost.

The Town of Berwick may also accommodate managers or director-approved staff members who need personal communication devices in the course of their job requirements by granting communication device reimbursements. When choosing an option, consideration should be given to the business needs of the department and the managers preference.

## 3. Definitions

- a. Communication Device Reimbursement – a job-related reimbursement, paid by direct deposit to managers or to director approved staff members, to help offset the cost of purchasing and operating a personal communication device. The communication device reimbursement is not taxable income, and it is not included in base pay for purposes of annual salary calculations, retirement, or other benefits. A communication device reimbursement is an alternative to a town-owned device.
- b. Department - a department as defined by the Town of Berwick organization chart.
- c. Incremental Business Expenses – expenses that result in costs above and beyond an employee's normal calling plan (e.g., excess minutes, roaming charges).
- d. Personal Communication Device – a communication device that is portable and designed to be carried by a person to carry out business communication activities. Note: Personal communication devices include items, such as cell phones, PDAs, tablets, handsfree devices, etc.
- e. Town-Owned Device – a personal communication device owned, maintained, and paid for directly by the Town for business use.
- f. Valid Business Need - the need to be readily accessible for contact with the public or with Town of Berwick staff, coupled with the impracticability of a regular land-line telephone for required or essential business communication needs due to:
  - a. frequent travel, working at remote locations, etc.; or
  - b. the need to receive or initiate communication in emergency situations; or
  - c. the need to be accessible and available during non-business hours or by electronic means at all times.

## **4. Guidelines**

### **4.1 Overview**

1. The Town of Berwick is committed to providing essential, business-related tools to its staff in a manner that promotes the proper stewardship of assets; complies with Canada Revenue Agency and other regulatory requirements; establishes a framework for consistent decision-making; and reduces or eliminates administrative burden whenever possible. The use of a personal communication device by an employee is for the benefit of the Town of Berwick in the furtherance of its business goals, rather than the convenience of the employee. A personal communication device will be provided only to an employee who is asked by his or her manager to carry one; an employee may not self-determine that a device is required. Personal communication devices should be considered when they are the least expensive practicable means of communication.

### **4.2 Town-Owned Devices**

1. An individual is only eligible for a town-owned device if he or she:
  - a. is a town employee, full- or part-time,
  - b. follows the measures as outlined in this procedure, and
  - c. has a valid business need for a personal communication device.Personal communication devices can include devices such as cell phones, PDAs, hands-free devices, tablets, etc.
2. "Valid business need" is defined as the need to be readily accessible for contact with the public or with staff, coupled with the impracticability of a regular land-line telephone for required or essential business communication needs due to:
  - a. frequent travel, working at a remote location, etc., or
  - b. the need to receive or initiate communication in emergency situations; or
  - c. the need to be accessible and available during non-business hours or by electronic means at all times.

### **4.3 Personally Owned Devices**

1. Instead of a town-owned device, some employees may receive a reimbursement from the Town to pay a fixed amount towards the town-related use of his or her personal communication device charges - a "Communication Device Reimbursement". Employees will receive a communication device reimbursement where there is a proven need and they are a manager or they have a director's approval. A town employee is only eligible for this option if he or she meets the eligibility requirements for a town-owned device, and there are no security issues with using their personally owned device.
2. The employee will choose the most appropriate service plan to provide adequate business-related services. Employees must pay for any charges in excess of their communication device reimbursement.
3. A communication device reimbursement will be paid to the bi-weekly; the payment method will be by direct deposit to an employee's bank account. The amount of this allowance will be a fixed amount up to a maximum of \$60.00 per month, such amount to be determined on an individual basis by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO.) The requirements of an employees' phone plan, such as data coverage or text coverage, will be a consideration when determining this amount. Record the amount determined on the Personal Communication Device Request form.
4. Communication device reimbursements do not qualify as compensation for retirement contribution purposes. Nor do they constitute an increase in base pay, or will they be included in any percentage calculations for increase to base pay.

#### **4.4 Transfer and Termination**

1. If an employee transfers from one position to another, they should work with the directors of both departments to determine whether the existing program will be transferred or terminated.
2. If an employee becomes ineligible for either a town-owned device or a communication device reimbursement at any time, based upon the criteria previously stated in this procedure, their coverage under this procedure will be terminated.
3. The Town of Berwick is not responsible for terminating personal communication device plans, nor will the town pay any early termination fee of an employee's phone contract when the employee leaves his or her position.

#### **4.5 Employee Protocols**

1. Personal calls may not be received or placed while the employee is in an area that is within earshot of customers.
2. Personal long distance calling is not permitted on any Town phones, unless the charges are billed to an outside party.
3. Employees must know the scope and limits of the device service plan for any town owned personal communication device they are issued by the Town of Berwick and make every reasonable effort to use the device within the limits of that plan. Ensure that telephone usage does not exceed mobile phone plan limits, due to incremental business expenses, personal use, or travel.
4. Employees must follow Nova Scotia's Motor Vehicle Act and the Town of Berwick's Appropriate Use of Mobile Communication Devices (Policy #5.017.) Phone bills and phone usage records are audited on a regular basis to ensure that this Personal Communication Devices Procedure is being followed. Breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
5. If provided with a communication device reimbursement:
  - a. Purchase equipment and services that meet the town-designated standard protocols as defined in this procedure.
  - b. Pay the monthly charges in full unless disputing charges with the carrier.
  - c. Provide the town with the communication device connection number.
  - d. Ensure that all data is maintained in accordance with the Town of Berwick's security requirements and deleted upon ending employment with the town or disposing of the device.
6. Employees must set up a PIN number or a password to secure access to their personal communication device to protect Town of Berwick confidential information. Employees must notify the I.T. Department if the device is used outside of Canada to ensure compliance with existing Nova Scotia legislation.
7. Employees should be aware that all the information on their phone may be wiped (deleted) at any time if the I.T. Department determines that there is a security risk to the Town of Berwick or to Town-owned confidential information. A data wipe may be initiated remotely and without warning to the employee.
8. Employees must immediately report lost or stolen personal communication devices to the Finance Department.
9. Employees using these devices should limit the number of days of email messages transferred to their device to a minimal number and should limit the number of messages stored in their Inbox to cut down on data transfer loads that may impact network performance.

#### **4.6 Official Contact Telephone Numbers**

1. A personally owned communication device may not be used as the official contact phone for a Town of Berwick department or service, nor may it act as the sole town contact phone number associated with a staff title. However, as required for normal business purposes, forwarding calls received at town-owned telephones associated with departments, services, or titles to personally owned cell phone numbers is allowed.

#### **4.7 Employee's Home Department Procedures**

1. Enforce the Personal Communication Devices Procedure.
2. Determine which Valid Business Need (section 4.2.2) from the Personal Communication Devices Guidelines applies to the employee and if the employee will receive a town-owned device or a communication device reimbursement.
3. Complete the "Personal Communication Device Request" form. These requests are initiated by the department head based on the Personal Communication Devices Procedure and on departmental budgets.
  - a. Contact the CAO for device/plan approval. If the employee will receive a town-owned device, the I.T. Department may assist in selecting a handset and an appropriate mobile phone service plan from the options in the Town's mobile phone contract. If the employee will receive a communication device reimbursement, the I.T. department will work with them to approve a personal device and plan.
  - b. A department Director will complete the section on communication device reimbursements, if required.
4. Review with the employee the scope and limits of the device service plan for any town owned personal communication device issued to an employee. Review the plan with the employee if any changes are made to the service plan. Review the plan with the employee prior to any out of country travel with the device.
5. Respond to any personal communication device account extra charges by reviewing employee use with the employee and determining if usage patterns should be changed or if the personal communication device plan needs to be adjusted. Apply the standard discipline policies of the Town of Berwick, if necessary, for abuse of plan limits.
6. Under the current mobile phone contract with Bell Aliant, town-owned phones have plans that cover use in Canada. If staff need to use a town-owned mobile phone in the United States, their department manager must contact the Finance Department to add a roaming plan to their mobile phone coverage. Use of town-owned mobile phones in other countries, outside of the U.S. and Canada, is not supported.
7. Departments that provide any town-owned devices or communication device reimbursements to employees must complete reviews, not less than annually, of all devices and reimbursements. A review carried out for this purpose must certify that each recipient or holder is still eligible and the device is still required or essential for the performance of his/her job duties. For town-owned devices, the review will also affirm that the mobile phone service plan selected for the employee is still the appropriate plan given the usage history of that employee. The review will take place at the beginning of each calendar year, and will be submitted to the Finance Department. Note: Departments must not wait until this annual review to discontinue the possession of a town-owned device or the reimbursement when an employee's job duties no longer meet the eligibility requirements. Examples of such a change in duties might include transfer to another department, assumption of a new job, certain types of leave, or termination.
8. Notify the Finance Department whenever an employee discontinues the use of a personal communication device.

#### **4.8 Finance Department Procedures**

1. Work with department managers to select the appropriate mobile phone service plans from the Bell Aliant mobile phone contract when setting up a new account or adjusting existing user accounts to accommodate new usage patterns.
2. Store and reuse spare handsets that meet the I.T. Department designated standard protocols.
3. Delete or securely archive Town of Berwick data from town-owned communication devices when an employee discontinues the use of such a device or when it is determined that there is a security risk to the Town or the Town's data.

4. Provide departments with detailed information on the scope and limits of the device service plans for any town-owned personal communication device as requested.
5. Monthly recurring communication device bills for town-owned devices will be paid to the vendor.
6. Report any personal communication device monthly account extra charges in excess of \$100.00 to the employee's department head.
7. The Finance Department must maintain a file containing all Personal Communication Device Requests.
8. Pay communication device reimbursements to employees as determined by approved Personal Communication Device Requests.
9. The Finance Department is responsible for record retention requirements for requests, certifications and approvals.
10. Collect town-owned communications devices from any terminated employees with such a device.

<b>Revision Dates:</b>	
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