

West Texas A&M University Procedure

25.99.99.W1.01/BF Communication Allowances

Approved September 1, 2004

Supplements System Policy 33.04, System Regulation 25.99.08, and University Rule 25.99.08.W1

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 West Texas A&M University has two options for the use of cell phones. One is for the department to have a University-owned cell phone and a University communications plan that would be used as a “roving” cell phone for employees needing such equipment. Documentation must be completed to justify the use of the cell phone in this manner. The other option for use of cell phones is to identify individuals whose job functions make it necessary for them to have a cell phone. This will become a personal cell phone and not University-owned equipment or University-owned plan.
- 1.2 West Texas A&M University recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may be enhanced by the provision of personal communication devices. Departments may elect to monetarily contribute to the employee's purchase and operation of personal communication devices under the provisions of this Procedure. Communication allowances shall be comprised of two components:
 - 1.2.1 One-time Communication Equipment Allowance which provides a contribution for equipment and activation fees,
 - 1.2.2 Monthly Communication Plan Allocations, which provide salary supplements for service plans.
- 1.3 A personal communication device acquired by provisions of a Communication Allowance contribution is considered to be the property of the employee and may be used in any way the employee deems appropriate. Contributions made to the employee by the University in the form of a One-time Communication Equipment Allowance, and a Monthly Communication Plan Allowance, are considered taxable compensation subject to required tax withholdings. A Communication Allowance is not considered to be an entitlement and is not part of an employee's base salary. The Monthly Communication Plan Allowance shall be paid in equal installments from departmental funds as a salary supplement and is provided to the employee only for as long as the employee qualifies for the allowance under these provisions.

2. APPROVAL

- 2.1 Department heads are responsible for determining which positions necessitate personal Communication Allowances. Granting a Communication Allowance to an

employee must be directly linked to the employee's University related job duties and responsibilities. Written justification/documentation must be included to document the need that a particular position warrants a cell phone. When taking into consideration the use of a communication allowance/cell phone, the department should consider alternate methods of communication, such as the University-issued calling card. This justification/documentation will also be necessary if the department chooses to purchase or lease a cell phone for the department, to be checked out by individuals on an as-needed basis. This documentation will need to be reviewed and approved by the senior administrator.

- 2.2 Copies of the approval forms used to process the One-time Communication Equipment Allowance, and the Monthly Communication Plan Allowance shall be retained in the employee's personnel file.

3. ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION ALLOWANCE AMOUNTS

3.1 Communication Equipment:

The Director of Purchasing Services shall annually publish the Communication Allowance rates for the purchase of cellular telephones. An employee may purchase such communication equipment for which the purchase price exceeds the established One-time Communication Equipment Allowance; however in such case the employee shall be responsible for all additional expenses.

3.2 Communication Service Plans:

3.2.1 The Director of Purchasing Services shall annually publish the University's Communication Allowance for cellular telephones. There are numerous service plans available through various service providers. Employees who are granted a Communication Allowance are free to choose from any provider and to select any plan. The costs and features of these services vary significantly. The Director of Purchasing Services will calculate the University's Communication Allowance for communication service plans (including provisions for the payment of related taxes and selected calling features). This calculation shall be based upon a composite of the Texas Building and Procurement Commission list of cellular telephone service providers that have been approved to provide cellular telephone service for State institutions and agencies. The employee may elect a more expensive plan, however, in such case the employee shall be responsible for all additional expenses.

3.3 Communication Allowance Provisions:

3.3.1 Reimbursement for Equipment and Activation Fees

3.3.1.1 Employees who secure communication equipment and services under the provisions of this procedure shall receive a one-time

contribution from the University consistent with the allowances established by Purchasing Services to offset related expenses. Equipment purchases include telephones, batteries, hands-free devices, cases, carrying devices and chargers. In order to receive a reimbursement for the purchase of equipment an employee must submit a copy of the receipt showing proof of the equipment purchase. The receipt should be attached to a Payroll Change Form.

3.3.1.2 Reimbursements will also be made for one-time service activation fees and taxes consistent with the allowance limits established by Purchasing Services.

3.3.1.3 A department shall process reimbursements in accordance with the One-time Communication Equipment Allowance provisions established by Payroll Services.

3.3.2 Monthly Salary Supplements

3.3.2.1 A contribution toward monthly expenses incurred in relation to the provision of a communication service plan (calling plan, calling features, paging services, and taxes) shall be provided in the form of a monthly salary supplement paid to the employee.

3.3.2.2 An employee may elect to enroll in a service plan that exceeds the approved plan limits. In such case, the employee will be provided a salary supplement ONLY for the communication allowance amount as approved. The employee is responsible for payment of monthly service regardless of whether that amount exceeds the monthly University communication allowance.

3.3.2.3 During the budget planning cycle, the Department head shall evaluate the employees' positions who are being provided the Communication Allowance. Monthly Communication Allowance salary supplement may be established at any time in a fiscal year but must remain constant in amount through the remainder of that year.

4. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The employee is responsible for the actual selection of, and enrollment in, his/her communication service plan.
- 4.2 An employee receiving a Communication Allowance must provide to his/her Department the current phone number to the communication device within five working days of the activation of that number.
- 4.3 The employee is personally liable for contract stipulations including payment of all expenses incurred (including long distance, roaming fees, and taxes). In the event that an employee leaves the position that qualified for a Communication Allowance, he/she continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the communication service plan.
- 4.4 An employee receiving a Communication Allowance must notify his/her department head within five working days of the inactivation of communication service or in the event that the communication equipment is lost or stolen.
- 4.5 An employee receiving a Communication Allowance from West Texas A&M University may not receive reimbursement from the University or another component of the Texas A&M System for use of communication equipment or services.

CONTACT FOR INTERPRETATION: Vice President for Business and Finance