

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the University of Alaska Mobile Communication Device Rules and Procedures:

1. Q: The university purchased a cell phone for me for business use and has been paying the monthly plan cost. Under the new policy, I hope to receive an allowance. Does that mean I need to purchase the phone from the university so that it will become my personal phone?

A: No, you do not need to purchase the phone. Upon approval of the allowance, the phone will be deemed to be your personal property.

2. Q: The university purchased a cell phone for me for business use and has been paying the monthly plan cost. I don't want to request an allowance under the new policy, but there are seven months remaining on the phone's contract and cancellation of it would mean penalties. What do I do?

A: Relinquish the phone to your supervisor or departmental contact. The department will seek to reassign the phone to an "on-call" group or another individual. If the department cannot reassign the phone they should contact the service provider to determine the cost/benefit of cancelling the contract.

3. Q: The university purchased a cell phone for me for business use and has been paying the monthly plan cost. However, I also have a personal cell phone. I would like to be covered under the allowance method. What should I do?

A: Keep your personal cell phone and request an allowance for it. The department should follow the guidance in Question #2 regarding the university-owned phone.

4. Q: The university purchased a cell phone for me for business use and has been paying the monthly plan cost. Under the new policy, I hope to receive an allowance. Can the contract be switched over to me so that I can have the same phone number?

A: Yes. The university person authorized on the account must initiate the change over request by contacting the service provider. The three main service providers, ACS, AT&T and GCI, will have different terms and processes for the transfer of service. For example, according to AT&T the transfer will require the acceptance of an 11 month contract. For GCI, they require fulfillment of the remaining term of the existing contract.

5. Q: What are some other options to provide for business communication needs.

A: Pagers and/or calling cards may be viable options to meet business needs. Acquisition of these products should follow normal departmental procurement procedures.

6. Q: What if I use my personal cell phone on a periodic basis for business purposes, do I qualify for an allowance?

A: Generally, no. Supervisors and directors should exercise good judgment by using criteria on the Mobile Device Allowance form to determine when an allowance is appropriate.

7. Q: I am not on the allowance method. My boss called me on my personal cell phone for a business-related purpose while I was on vacation and I incurred extra charges on my phone bill as a result. May I be reimbursed?

A: Yes. In cases where plan minutes are exceeded or other additional costs are incurred as a result of a business call, these are reimbursable. These situations should not be frequent in nature, such that it is more appropriate that you are on allowance method. The employee must be able to document the costs.

8. Q: I am on the allowance method. I was charged more than my normal monthly plan cost due to identifiable business use (voice or data), when my plan minutes/data limits were exceeded. May I be reimbursed?

A: Generally, no. The allowance method is similar to travel meals per diem, in as much one does not get reimbursed for costs in excess of per diem. However, in exceptional circumstances, the regional campus Chief Financial Officer may reimburse such overages.