

TAKOMA PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT - GENERAL ORDERS



TITLE: TELEPHONE CALLS	NUMBER: 307
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 18, 2011	REVIEW DATE: May 18, 2022
New X Amends Rescinds	Dated: April 23, 2002
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01 Purpose: To establish guidelines for making telephone calls from station telephones or wireless phones.

02 Policy: To allow for the reasonable use of all telephones; prohibit unreasonable telephone use and resulting expense; and ensure that telephone use is monitored.

03 Long Distance Calls:

A. Long distance toll calls may be made for official police department business only, except that a long-distance toll call for a family emergency may be made with the permission of a supervisor. Nothing herein is intended to prohibit the use of access numbers to networks of other carriers for the purpose of making long distance telephone toll calls of a personal nature from department telephones, or any other means of making personal calls that do not result in a charge to the city.

B. Codes for making long distance toll calls must be obtained from the Administrative Services Division and used when making calls. The phone system will prompt the caller to indicate when to enter the code.

04 Cellular Telephone Calls: Cellular telephones may be used for Department business except that their use is strictly prohibited on the scene of a confirmed or suspected explosive device. Their use for personal business should be limited and reasonable during on-duty hours. All calls in excess of 10 minutes, made or received while on duty, may be investigated.

Cellular phones and/or any other wireless technology may be used in place of the department radio on calls for service if the radio system has gone down or the information to be exchanged needs to be kept confidential. In such instances, the call for service will be radio logged (entered into CAD) by the dispatcher. It is important to each officer involved in a call for service and the department to have a record of the content and time of all relevant transmissions, regardless of the technology used.

A. Written documentation is required of patrol officers only on long distance toll calls made from a department-issued cellular phone.

B. The Commander of each Division is responsible for all cellular telephones assigned to his/her unit, and will conduct an audit of use as soon as possible after the last day of every month. Copies of the bills will be provided by Administrative Services. Division Commanders will be responsible for correcting any problems revealed by the audit.

C. Examples of authorized and prohibited uses of cellular telephones are as follows:

Authorized Use:

- * Notification to on-call detective
- * Calls made to officers who have called in sick
- * Business calls made from an incident command post
- * Dispatcher calls of a sensitive nature to the Patrol Operations Commander or Shift Supervisor requiring immediate response that cannot go over the air, not including questions that can be handled on Channel 2
- * Calls to the listed owner of a vehicle currently stopped on traffic
- * Calls made to verify the story or identity of a person being detained on the street
- * Calls made to or from the station to communicate with any unit outside of radio range
- * Necessary calls made during hostage/barricade situations

Prohibited Use:

- * On the scene of a confirmed or suspected explosive device
- * Weather, or time or to any 900 or other toll-based telephone number

D. Excess Charges: Use of any Departmental telephone or other electronic communications device for personal use, which results in any charge beyond the normal cost of monthly service, will be reimbursed by the employee, who will bear the responsibility for assessing the costs and reimbursing the city for its use. Such use is not to be excessive. Loss or destruction of a departmental-issued wireless phone will be documented in a memo to the supervisor of the employee to whom the phone is issued. If the loss/destruction is determined to be due to the employee's negligence, he/she will be responsible for reimbursing the city for the replacement cost.

E. Only the employee to whom the phone is issued is allowed to possess and carry the phone; that is, he/she will not allow a friend or family member control of the phone.

F. Employees carrying a wireless phone, whether issued or personally owned, shall be responsible to adjust the phone so that it does not emit an audible tone whenever the employee responds to a call for service, attends a meeting with members of the public, conducts an interview, attends court, attends training classes, or conducts a surveillance or other covert operation.