

## **PROTOCOL FOR APPROVAL OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Prior to the approval of any request for purchase/reimbursement of electronic devices and/or service payments, the job responsibilities of the individual should be reviewed to insure the electronic devices and/or services selected are warranted and will safeguard sensitive University information.

Payment for electronic communication devices and/or services can be made through a taxable allowance to qualified employees or directly by the University. **The allowance process serves as the default method for employee procurement of these devices and services.**

All payments must be approved by the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor and must be reviewed annually for continued payment.

### **Transition**

The University will no longer purchase any new mobile communications devices or service contracts, except for devices to be assigned to groups; nor, with the same exception, will any existing mobile communications device contracts be renewed or extended. In order to avoid cancellation fees and to allow for an orderly transition, anyone currently using a University-owned mobile communications device, acquired prior to the establishment of this policy, may continue to use that device until the expiration date of the contract in place on the effective date of this policy. An itemized review of the bill by the employee and supervisor must be included before payment will be made.

All employees who currently have ECD's must complete the appropriate request form for review by the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor. The Chancellor and Vice Chancellors will evaluate the list of employees who currently have university cell phones/PDAs to determine if they should continue to be paid by the University or if they should go on the allowance method.

### **Enterprise license**

Blackberries can be used to access email and the internet either with or without the BES server. Using the BES server gives the employee access to contacts, calendar, and tasks, in addition to email and the internet. Selection of this option results in an annual charge to purchase the BES server and CAL license. The department should determine whether this is a departmental or employee cost.

### **Employee Allowance Procedures (default method)**

This is the procedure to be used for electronic communication devices assigned to one employee and including both business and personal use.

An employee's supervisor is responsible to determine the need for an employee to have an electronic communication device (including internet service.) An ECD allowance can offset a portion of or all expense of the ECD or service. It is the responsibility of the employee's supervisor to determine the dollar amount of the allowance for ECD. This amount should be based on the cost of service which allows the employee to conduct University business in an efficient manner and should cover the employee's projected business-related expenses only. Generally accepted reimbursement rates are \$15

for low business use, \$25 for moderate business use, \$40 for high business use, and \$45 for data services per month. If amount requested exceeds \$85 per month, an explanation must be attached to the allowance form. In no case shall the amount of reimbursement exceed the cost of service. The allowance shall not exceed \$200/month or \$2,400 annually for all combined services.

It is the responsibility of the employee to enter into the cellular phone contract, or contract for internet services, under their own name. The purchase of any equipment is also the responsibility of the employee. A department may determine that an allowance for reimbursement to purchase equipment should be made by Montana State University Billings to the employee. The applicable section of the ECD Allowance Request Form must be completed. A copy of the receipt for equipment purchases must be attached to the ECD Allowance Authorization Form.

If Blackberries or other PDA devices are approved for payment via the allowance method, provisions should be made with the employee to ensure proper safeguarding and disposal of University information, by either turning in the equipment or working with IT to delete all University data on the ECD device.

**Checklist for allowance method:**

**Supervisory certification of the business purposes for this allowance** (mark all that apply):

- This employee is a key staff member needed in the event of an emergency (cabinet, etc.)
- This employee is frequently away from access to traditional land-based phone services.
- This employee is involved in frequent off hours/on-call activity.
- This nature of this employee's work is critical and immediate response is required.
- The related cost is justified when compared with alternative communication choices.
- Other- If not listed above, please state why device is necessary, why it is essential in carrying out job responsibilities and why job responsibilities could not be carried out without it.

**Departmental Purchases Procedures (exception method)**

Departmental purchase of Electronic Communication Devices (ECD) and/or services is the exception. The departmental administrator in consultation with their supervisor will determine the appropriateness of such departmental expenditures. Justification for departmental purchase must be included on the ECD Request and Authorization Form.

This is the procedure to be used for those users approved to use electronic communication devices accessible to more than one employee or available only for official business use. MSU-Billings may, in some cases, purchase and own mobile communications devices to be assigned to groups or individuals. This may be done if and only if the personal use of those devices is strictly limited to essential personal calls and itemized reviews of bills are submitted before payment.

Documentation for payments of ECD must be supported by an original detailed invoice or statement from the service provider. The documents must also include support of managements review, substantiation, detailed use records, and any reimbursement documentation for personal use. The supervisor and employee must sign off on the monthly statement that all calls have been reviewed and are for business purposes only or have been reimbursed. This must be attached to the BPA for payment of the vendor bill.

Supervisors and employees are responsible to ensure all ECD equipment is returned to the University prior to transfer of equipment or termination of employment.

**Checklist for Departmental Purchase Method:**

**To be completed by Supervisor or Fund Controller:**

**Justification for departmental purchase instead of employee allowance method:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Certification of the business purposes for this allowance** (mark all that apply):

- This employee is a key staff member needed in the event of an emergency (cabinet, etc.)
- This employee is frequently away from access to traditional land-based phone services.
- This employee is involved in frequent off hours/on-call activity.
- This nature of this employee's work is critical and immediate response is required.
- The related cost is justified when compared with alternative communication choices.
- Other- If not listed above, please state why device is necessary, why it is essential in carrying out job responsibilities and why job responsibilities could not be carried out without it.