

33.04.02 Use of Telecommunication Services

Revised [November 8, 2018](#)

Next Scheduled Review: November 8, 2023

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Regulation Summary

This regulation provides guidelines for members of The Texas A&M University System (system) governing the use of workplace telecommunication services which include land line and system-owned cellular telephones and facsimiles.

Definitions

Click to view [Definitions](#).

Regulation

1. GENERAL

In general, workplace telecommunication services used for personal use must not (1) result in additional expense incurred by the system; (2) be more than incidental in nature; (3) impede normal business functions; (4) be for non-approved private commercial purposes; (5) be used for illegal activity; (6) be used to intentionally access, create, store or transmit obscene or patently offensive materials; or (7) be used to compete unfairly with private sector entities or private consultants. Workplace telecommunication services include land line and system-owned cellular telephones and facsimiles.

If it is necessary for an employee to incur an additional charge from a system telephone or facsimile for non-business use, it is strongly encouraged that a personal cell phone, calling card, collect or third-party charge be used. If long distance calls are made from member phones, reimbursement must be made by the individual to the member per Section 2 of this regulation. No non-business collect calls will be charged to a system telephone (see also System Policy 33.04, *Use of System Resources*). If the non-business usage of telecommunication services results in a direct cost to the state for any reason, it is the employee's responsibility to reimburse the member as shown in Section 2 of this regulation. The use of telecommunication services for any illegal activity or to intentionally access, create, store or transmit patently offensive or obscene materials, as defined in Texas Penal Code § 43.21 (other than in the course of academic research), is strictly prohibited regardless of whether or not it results in an additional charge to the state.

2. Members have the responsibility to monitor telecommunication services usage by each employee. Members will ensure compliance with Section 1 of this regulation including

review of the telecommunication services charges by departments and employees. If incidental non-business use of telecommunication services results in a direct cost to the member, the charge will be identified and the full direct cost must be reimbursed by the employee. This reimbursement will include the appropriate charges and any applicable taxes and fees. Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 372 allows for incidental “personal use of telephones or computer services as long as the state is reimbursed for any direct costs incurred” and that the use “does not impede agency functions.”

3. Incidental use of a telecommunication service that meets the above criteria will not be subject to personal income tax under IRS Notice 2011-72 as long as the use is considered a de minimis fringe. Members have the responsibility to document that the personal use of member-issued cell phones is incidental and that it meets the de minimis requirement. Department heads will certify the business reason for the device.
4. If communication allowances are deemed necessary and appropriate by the member for positions which require use of personal communications devices, the member may develop guidelines for such an allowance as defined in System Regulation 25.99.09, *Communication Allowances*.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 134](#)

[Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 372 \(as modified\)](#)

[Tex. Penal Code § 43.21](#)

[Internal Revenue Code § 132\(e\)](#)

[System Policy 33.04, *Use of System Resources*](#)

[System Regulation 25.99.09, *Communication Allowances*](#)

Prior to the October 2013 version of this regulation, it was published as System Regulation 25.99.08, *Use of Telecommunication Service*.

Member Rule Requirements

A rule is not required to supplement this regulation.

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