
POLICY MANUAL *Department of Natural Resources*

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Cancels: PO05 – 002 E-Mail and Internet Policy dated June 22, 1998
PO05 – 004 Cellular Telephones Policy dated July 2, 2001

PO05 – 006 Use of State Electronic Communication Systems

DISCUSSION

This policy covers use of state-owned electronic communication systems.

Electronic communication systems hold great potential for improving the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of employees and the department.

For purposes of this policy certain definitions apply:

Electronic Communication Systems (ECS): ECS include, but are not limited to, any electronic media that is used to generate, transmit, display, reproduce, or store communications for business purposes. Such electronic media include: Personal computers, portable laptop computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), software, e-mail systems, telephones, cellular phones, voicemail systems, facsimile (fax) machines, and SCAN and SCAN Plus.

Internet: Internet is a generic term for the worldwide "network of networks" of computers through which documents, data, and other information can be accessed and downloaded.

Intranet: Intranet is a generic term used for Internet access to information, or applications that are to be shared within the agency. The public will not have access to this service.

POLICY

General limitations that apply to all forms of personal use of Electronic Communication Systems (ECS) are listed below, followed by specific limitations for certain forms of ECS, including the Internet, E-mail, cell phones, facsimile (fax) machines, and SCAN and SCAN Plus. Any special considerations pertaining to the use of Electronic Communications Systems when performing emergency response duties under the incident command system are addressed in a separate policy.

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GENERAL LIMITATIONS

Permissible Personal Use (as set forth in WAC 292-110-010):

- There is little or no cost to the state;
- Any use is brief in duration, occurs infrequently, and is the most effective use of time or resources;
- The use does not interfere with the performance of the officer's or employee's official duties;
- The use does not disrupt or distract from the conduct of state business due to volume or frequency;
- The use does not disrupt other state employees and does not obligate them to make a personal use of state resources; and
- The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information, or software.

Prohibited Personal Use (as set forth in WAC 292-110-010):

- Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business or private employment;
- Any use for the purpose of supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group, including, but not limited to: A private business, a nonprofit organization, or a political party (unless provided for by law or authorized by an agency head or designee);
- Any use for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition. Such a use of state resources is specifically prohibited by RCW 42.52.180, subject to the exceptions in RCW 42.52.180(2);
- Any use for the purpose of participating in or assisting in an effort to lobby the state legislature, or a state agency head. Such a use of state resources is specifically prohibited by RCW 42.17.190, subject to the exceptions in RCW 42.17.190(3);
- Any use related to conduct that is prohibited by a federal or state law or rule, or a state agency policy; and
- Any private use of any state property that has been removed from state facilities or other official duty stations, even if there is no cost to the state.

Other Prohibited Uses:

- Any use for the purpose of promoting personal political beliefs or religious affiliations;
- Any use for the purpose of promoting harassment;

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- Any use for the purpose of discriminating on the basis of race, creed, color, martial status, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual preferences/orientation, disabled or Vietnam-era or veteran's status, age, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation;
- Any use for the purpose of promoting unlawful activity; and
- Any use for the purpose of accessing, transmitting, displaying, chatting, or posting on the Web or using the Internet for reasons or practices other than authorized business use related to assigned job duties, except permissible uses stated in this policy.

SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS

Internet and E-mail:

As a norm, limited personal use of the Internet and E-mail is defined as approximately five minutes or less per occurrence and as a norm not to exceed fifteen minutes per week.

The Internet is a public communications medium. There is no expectation of privacy for use of state electronic communication systems.

Cellular Telephones:

State purchased cellular phones will be used for official business only except as provided below.

To obtain authorization for purchase or use, there must be a demonstrated business or public safety need for which cellular telephones are the most economical and efficient means of communication.

The department will pay for cellular lines that are used solely for state business. A private line may not be installed on an agency purchased cellular phone. However, a state line may be installed on a personal cellular phone.

Management will determine the appropriate option for allowing cellular phone use based on the most economical option for the agency. There are two options for consideration:

1. **The agency purchases cellular service and service is billed to the agency.**
2. **Private cellular service with official business calls reimbursed to the employee with advance agreement on the limited use.**

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Under option 2, reimbursement for official business calls on private cellular lines will be only for the charges for the business call, and will not include any portion of a monthly service fee.

DNR employees are authorized to use cellular phones to give notification of unanticipated work schedule changes. Use for this purpose is considered official business. These calls will be logged when made, reported, and noted on monthly statement when reviewed.

The exception to official business use of an agency purchased cellular phone is a personal emergency. A personal emergency is a sudden, unforeseen situation of a serious nature requiring immediate action when other options are not reasonably available. Employees will report such use and reimburse the department for personal emergency calls. These calls will be logged when made, reported, and noted on monthly statement when reviewed.

Facsimile (FAX) Machines:

Personal use of facsimile (fax) machines is not allowed.

Scan And Scan Plus:

SCAN and SCAN Plus are for official business only. However, DNR employees are authorized to use SCAN and SCAN Plus to give notification of unanticipated work schedule changes. Use for this purpose is considered official business. These calls will be logged when made and noted on monthly statement when reviewed.

Each employee is accountable for all long distance calls made with their SCAN authorization number.

Willful violation of this policy may result in corrective or disciplinary action.

IMPLEMENTATION

The department will maintain both internal and external home pages, subject to availability of funds. Operations and technology associated with the Internet will be managed by the Information Technology Division.

The Information Technology Division will develop department standards and procedures for publishing information on the Internet. The Communications Product Development

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Group will develop training courses or other written or oral means to document competency for Internet users. The appropriate appointing authority will take appropriate corrective action in response to any abuse of these communications systems.

The Communications Director or designee shall approve appropriate subjects for publication on the Internet. This authority includes the format, standards, and guidelines that must be followed to ensure consistency across the agency for public access to information.

Each Division or Region manager shall approve appropriate subjects for publication on the Intranet, assuring that material produced by their staff is current and meets department standards.

Cellular Telephones

Executive Management, or Division or Region Managers must authorize the purchase or acquisition of cellular equipment and subscription plans and maintain continued oversight of the proper use and accountability of cellular equipment and subscription plans purchased on the state contract and/or billed to the state.

Financial Management Division will establish a system for employees to reimburse the department for emergency use of agency cellular phones.

Human Resource Division will submit this reimbursement system to the Washington State Executive Ethics Board for approval.

Each DNR employee using a cell phone must upon request of management review their monthly statement and certify the calls were placed for official state business, as demonstrated by signing and dating their monthly bill. Supervisors and/or division or region management shall review monthly cell phone statements on a regular basis for compliance with this policy.

SCAN and SCAN Plus

Each DNR employee using SCAN must upon request of management review their monthly statement and certify the calls were placed for official state business, as demonstrated by signing and dating their monthly bill. Supervisors and/or division or region management shall review monthly SCAN statements on a regular basis for compliance with this policy.

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Cell phone and SCAN statements are to be filed and retained in a manner complying with the applicable records retention schedule, i.e. Vendor Pay Documents (GS01004) and SCAN Account Detail Report (GS08004).

Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the agency Ethics Advisor in Human Resources Division.

SEE ALSO

PO01-008 – Ethics

PR05-006-01 – Procedure for Reimbursement for Emergency Personal Use of an Agency
Cellular Telephone Line

PR06-006-01 - Procedure for DNR Information Published on the Internet

RCW 42.17 - Obtaining Public Records

RCW 42.18 - Public Officers and Agencies - Use of State Office

RCW 42.52 - Ethics in Public Service

RCW 42.52.160, Use of persons, money, or property for private gain.

WAC 292-110-010, Use of State Resources

Use of State Resources – Frequently Asked Questions and Examples.

Washington State Archives: General Retention Schedules

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