



## **House of Assembly**

### **Cellular and Landline Phone Services Policy for Members of the House of Assembly and Constituency Assistants**

**Revised July 2016**

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## 1. Approval

Under the authority of subparagraph 20(6)(b)(ii) of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the House of Assembly Management Commission establishes this policy respecting services for cellular phones and landline phones for Members of the House of Assembly and their Constituency Assistants.

## 2. Purpose

To provide direction to Members of the House of Assembly and Constituency Assistants regarding cellular phone and landline long distance services.

## 3. General

Members of the House of Assembly and Constituency Assistants must ensure that the phone services provided are eligible for reimbursement under the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules*, and Directives of the Commission.

## 4. Process

### 4.1. Applicability

This policy applies to all cellular phone and landline long distance services which are paid by the Legislature for Members of the House of Assembly and Constituency Assistants.

### 4.2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the term “cellular phone” refers to analog and digital cellular phones, as well as Blackberry units and similar electronic devices that provide data and/or phone communications.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “landline phone” refers to the office phone or the home phone in the Member’s residence.

“User” means a Member of the House of Assembly or a Constituency Assistant.

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“Business purposes” means constituency business (as defined in S.2 of the *Members’ Resources and Allowance Rules*) and departmental business (in the case of Members who are Ministers and have been provided with a cellular phone and services package by the Legislature).

### 4.3. Restrictions

This policy does not apply to any phone services provided by the Executive Branch of government.

### 4.4. Cellular Phones

#### 4.4.1 General Usage

1. Members and Constituency Assistants will be **limited to three (3)** cellular devices each **per General Assembly**.
2. Each user is responsible for the security of the cellular phone and should be aware that cellular phone conversations may not always be secure and confidential.
3. Each user is responsible for ensuring that the cellular phone is used in a manner that is consistent with this policy.
4. Cellular phones are intended for business purposes only. However, it is recognized that some incidental personal usage may occur as a result of the user not being accessible by landlines on a regular basis.
5. Users are not required to reimburse Government for incidental personal phone or data usage. Personal usage that exceeds what is considered “incidental” should be reimbursed to Government. Each user must set the threshold for his/her incidental usage based on the particular circumstances and expected requirement for personal usage. Some general guidance would be: personal usage that exceeds 10% of the monthly airtime/data usage costs; airtime exceeding 80 minutes per month; or some other reasonable basis that is consistent with the business demands placed upon the cellular phone user.

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6. Each user should avail of temporary packages when travelling to the United States. Contact Corporate and Members' Services Division staff to arrange the period of coverage.

#### 4.4.2 Replacements

1. Members and Constituency Assistants are required to take **reasonable and appropriate** care of their cellular devices.
2. Replacement cellular devices will only be issued with the prior approval of the Clerk where:
  - The Member or Constituency Assistant is within his/her limit of 3 cellular devices per General Assembly;
  - The cellular package allows an upgrade at \$0; or
  - A manufacturer's defect with the device has been established.
3. Once the limit of three (3) cellular devices per General Assembly has been exceeded by the Member or Constituency Assistant, the cost of a replacement device may be charged to the Constituency Allowance allocation (pending availability of funds).

#### 4.5. Landline Phones

The user is responsible for ensuring that the long distance charges on each landline phone assigned for his/her use were incurred by the user for business purposes.

Each user is responsible for reimbursing to the Newfoundland Exchequer Account through the Central Cashier's office the cost of personal long distance calls when the total cost of personal calls in one month exceeds \$1.

#### 4.6. Administrative Matters

Each billing period, Corporate and Members' Service Division will send each Member copies of all phone bills that are charged to the Member's allocation. The Member is responsible for reviewing and signing a

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statement each billing period to ensure that the phone services are accurate. If the user does not sign and return the statement to Corporate and Members' Service Division of the House of Assembly Service, it is assumed that the user is in agreement with the charges for that billing period.

A detailed review may not be feasible given the nature of cellular phones, the inherent difficulty in identifying the nature of certain phone calls (especially incoming calls due to lack of detail on the bill), and the relatively insignificant amounts involved in some cases. Therefore, a reasonable review of the bill details is acceptable.

## **5.0 References**

*Members' Resources and Allowances Rules*

Standard Office Allocation Package

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