

St. Joseph, Missouri Police Department



DIRECTIVE TYPE: GENERAL ORDER		INDEX NUMBER: GO1201
SUBJECT: CELLULAR TELEPHONE USE		
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I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of cellular telephones by police personnel, while conducting police business.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of the St. Joseph Police Department for its members to use telephones in a professional manner to facilitate effective communication within the Police Department and with the public. The use of mobile telephones or other mobile devices in vehicles, however, require the highest level of scrutiny and safety so as not to interfere with vehicle operation.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. Wireless Telephones

Employees shall carry their department issued wireless telephone while on duty; however, the use of these mobile devices will only be permitted under the following conditions:

1. Department issued wireless telephones are authorized for official City business. Exceptions may be made for family situations or personal matters that require immediate attention where alternative forms of communication are not suitable or easily available.
2. Department issued wireless telephones may be used in off-duty capacities only for the conduct of police related business or during departmentally managed off duty law enforcement actions.
3. Wireless telephones will not be routinely used in lieu of the police radio to conduct police business (i.e., calling for tow trucks or ambulances). Circum-

venting the normal Police Communications Center will only be allowed in exigent situations.

4. Employees with department issued cell phones will not call the Communications Center to be put through to a number. They will instead use their department issued phone to make such calls. (i.e., calling complainants/victims/witnesses/suspects)
5. Barring catastrophic failure of the police telephone system, communications personnel will not use wireless telephones in the Communications Center. Such use may interfere with police communications equipment or distract from monitoring police communications equipment.
6. For employees not issued department wireless telephones, the use of personally owned wireless telephones for personal calls at the workplace should be limited to regular break times. Use of personal cellular phones either in voice or data transmission while on duty should be restricted to essential communications and should be limited in length. Engagement in multiple or extended conversations unrelated to police business or similar use that interferes with the performance of duty is prohibited.
7. Employees will not be required to carry their department issued wireless telephones off duty unless they are in an on-call status.

B. Priorities

Employees will not allow the wireless telephones to interfere with their duties and responsibilities. Answering the police radio and conducting regular police duties will take priority over use of the wireless telephone.

C. Use in Police Vehicles

1. Employees should not use wireless telephones for voice/text communication while driving a police vehicle, or any other vehicle while on police business, unless the phone is used in hands-free mode, and it is operationally necessary.
2. Officers will not use wireless telephones for voice/text communication while driving a police vehicle in a pursuit or emergency response mode.
3. Employees will demonstrate safe driving practices; for that reason, the following additional guidelines will be followed in respect to the use of telephones in vehicles:
 - Always practice safe driving by buckling up, keeping your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
 - Be familiar with your wireless telephone features, such as speed-dial and redial.
 - Use the telephone in hands-free mode when use of the telephone while driving cannot be avoided.
 - Alert the person that you are speaking with that you are operating a vehicle.

- Use the manual dialing option only when stopped at a stoplight or pulled off the roadway.
- If applicable, ask the passenger to make the call for you.
- Allow your voicemail to pick up your calls when it is unsafe to answer the telephone.
- Do NOT use the data communications features (texting, email, internet) of your telephone while driving. If user interaction is required, pull off the road to a safe area.
- Do not use the telephone in distracting traffic conditions.
- Cease the use of the telephone during hazardous situations, such as bad weather conditions or congested traffic.
- Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversation while driving.
- Keep conversations brief and limited to business discussion.
- End the call without warning if the traffic situation warrants it; and
- Stay in the slow lane while talking and do not pass other vehicles. Keep your driving maneuvers simple.

D. Prohibited Use of Camera Function

Unless conducting an official investigation with the approval of the Chief of Police, or his designee, employees will not use wireless devices to capture, record or transmit still or video images of other employees without their explicit consent. Employees may use their department issued wireless device to take evidentiary photos when related directly to an investigation they are involved in. Evidentiary photos shall not be transmitted to third parties without a compelling investigative need or approval of a supervisor. Once evidentiary photos have been booked into evidence, they will be deleted from the wireless device but left in the trash/recently deleted folder of the device to be auto deleted 30 days later. Use of such devices is prohibited in restrooms, locker rooms or any other place where conditions present a likelihood of obtaining images that are, or may be construed to be, pornographic, vulgar, demeaning, embarrassing or otherwise illegal or improper in nature.

E. Security Considerations

1. Employees using a wireless telephone for police business, whether the telephone is police issued or personally owned, will apply the same level of discretion and confidentiality to their conversations as required when making a transmission by police radio.
2. Employees should monitor the actions of people using wireless devices in and around police facilities, vehicles, crime scenes, etc., to ensure sensitive activities, documents, computer displays, etc. are protected from surreptitious recording or transmission.

F. General Considerations

Wireless telephones should be set to the silent or vibrate ringer/alert mode when brought into an area by a police employee conducting official business. If set to vibrate, the user should ensure the device is not left unattended in a place where the vibrations and any resulting sound might distract, annoy, or interrupt coworkers or the public (Training Room, meetings, shared office areas, etc.).

Chris Connally

Chief of Police

Date