United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

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OCIO Directive 2005-013

Memorandum

To: Deputy Secretary
Office of the Solicitor
Assistant Secretaries
Office of Inspector General
Heads of Bureaus and Offices

From: for W. Hord Tipton
Chief Information Officer

Subject: Clarification to Telephone Use Policy (Cellular Telephones and Wireless Telecommunications Services)

Purpose:

The Office of the Chief Information Officer continues to receive questions regarding the personal use of Government-owned, leased, and managed cellular telephones (mobile phone). The Office of Policy, Management and Budget will soon be revising the June 14, 2000, Telephone Use Policy (Policy), the scope of which includes mobile phones. In the interim, this directive serves to clarify that the "least cost to the Government" means of communication is used, whether using a landline or wireless device, i.e., mobile phone. (The Policy can be found at: http://www.doi.gov/pam/phoneuse.htm.)

Background:

Since the issuance of the Policy, there have been many changes in the wireless industry including improved and reduced rate plans for mobile devices. These plans provide more minutes for lower cost and also free minutes mobile-to-mobile, evening/night and weekends. In many instances an employee can use their mobile phone without incurring any additional costs, especially while in travel status. Each employee should be familiar with their rate plan structure and associated costs, including those activities which will add billable minutes.

Scope:

This directive applies to all Department of the Interior (DOI) employees who use Government-owned, leased, and managed mobile phones.

Policy Clarification:

As long as no additional costs are imposed on the Government than what would be incurred by using other methods of communication, DOI employees may use their Government provided mobile phone for personal use to the same extent that they use other Government telephones whether at their duty station or on official travel. Because rate plans are determined by business requirements employees may be responsible for charges that exceed their rate plan due to personal calls. Employees should be cautioned that most mobile phones are not a secure way to communicate and monitor their discussions accordingly.

The Policy permits employees to make and receive personal phone calls on an infrequent basis, such as: calls to alert household members about working late or other schedule changes; calls to make alternative child care arrangements; calls to talk with doctors, hospital staff, or day care providers: calls to determine the safety of family or household members, particularly in an emergency; calls to make funeral arrangements; calls to reach businesses or Government agencies that can only be contacted during work hours, and calls to arrange emergency repairs to vehicles or residences. Such calls are deemed to be in the interest of the Government to the extent they enable employees to remain at their work place, thus increasing Government efficiency. In making purely personal calls, employees must ensure that, all long distance calls are made at their own expense (except while on overnight travel status when an employee may make a brief call home), the calls do not adversely affect the performance of official duties or the organization's work performance, and the calls are of reasonable duration and frequency.

Time Frame:

The Policy remains in effect with this clarification until a new Policy can be issued.

Contact:

If you have any questions, please call me at 202-208-6194. Staff may contact Ms. Ingrid Caples at (703) 487-8556.

cc: Bureau Chief Information Officers
Bureau Deputy Chief Information Officers
Bureau Chief Technology Officers
Telecommunications Managers