

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUBJECT/TITLE:	Cell Phone Stipend Policy
SCOPE:	Galion City Health Department Employees
CONTACT PERSON & DIVISION:	Trish Factor Health Commissioner, Administration
ORIGINAL DATE ADOPTED:	8/13/19
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PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

This policy defines the conditions for which the Galion City Health Department (GCHD) Board of Health (BOH) approves a stipend for personal cellular telephone's for GCHD Exempt Employees and/or GCHD Eligible Employees.

POLICY

The Galion City Health Department (GCHD) recognizes that cellular telephones have become valuable tools for GCHD officials to enhance their productivity and increase their responsiveness while working on behalf of the GCHD. Cellular phones can provide effective and efficient means to coordinate work activities, provide and/or receive needed information, deliver public services with minimal delay and assure personal and public safety.

The Galion City Health Department (GCHD) will pay a monthly stipend to compensate GCHD Exempt Employees and/or GCHD Eligible Employees for the use their personal cellular telephones for GCHD business. The subsidy will be provided to GCHD Exempt Employees due to their jobs requiring the ability to have constant contact, in accordance with this policy. The subsidy will be provided to GCHD Eligible Employees due to their job requirements, grants, and/or specific funding mechanism.

PROCEDURES & STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

I. Eligibility for Subsidy

- A. The Galion City Health Department Board of Health has determined that GCHD Exempt Employees are eligible for the subsidy because they meet the following criteria:
 1. Public Safety: GCHD Exempt Employees require immediate and direct communication with local emergency responders in order to provide for the health and safety of the public.
 2. Accessibility: GCHD Exempt Employees, while working outside of the office, must initiate immediate and direct communication with the GCHD office and/or other public or private entities or persons to access information in order to conduct official GCHD business in a timely fashion where the likelihood that conventional telephones may or will not be readily accessible.
 3. Responsiveness: It is routinely necessary for other officials and/or GCHD employees or members of the general public to reach this individual immediately and directly to discuss official GCHD business when they are out of the office.
- B. The Galion City Health Department Board of Health has determined that GCHD Employees eligible for the subsidy must meet all the following criteria:
 1. Accessibility: GCHD Employees that, while working outside of the office, must initiate immediate and direct communication with the GCHD office and/or other public or private entities or persons to access

information in order to conduct official GCHD business in a timely fashion where the likelihood that conventional telephones may or will not be readily accessible.

2. Grant/ Funding Specific: A GCHD Employee must be working under a grant and/or funding mechanism that has been approved to provide a cell phone stipend.
3. Responsiveness: It is routinely necessary for other officials and/or GCHD employees or members of the general public to reach this individual immediately and directly to discuss official GCHD business when they are out of the office.

II. Amount of Subsidy

- A. The amount of the subsidy shall be \$40/month for a cellular phone with a data plan.
- B. A subsidy for a cellular phone without a data plan would have to receive prior approval from the GCHD Board of Health.
- C. Any subsidy provided shall be paid through payroll and considered taxable income with all applicable taxes held.

III. Acquisition of Cellular Telephones

- A. The responsibility of entering into a contract and purchasing a personal cellular telephone rest solely with the GCHD Exempt Employee or GCHD Eligible Employee. The GCHD BOH will also not be responsible for purchasing any accessories such as cases or chargers.
- B. If a personal cellular telephone is damaged, lost, or stolen, due to work-related activities, the GCHD Exempt Employee or GCHD Eligible Employee may be eligible for partial reimbursement of a replacement device. The employee seeking a reimbursement due to these circumstances must notify their immediate supervisor of such request. A supervisor receiving such request must notify the GCHD BOH. The GCHD BOH will make the final decision as to obligation and reimbursement amount. The GCHD BOH may request any supporting documentation and/or evidence as they deem necessary to determine eligibility for such reimbursement.
- C. If, prior to the end of the employee's contract with their personal cellular phone provider, there is a need to end the contract, for any reason, the subsidy will be discontinued and the employee will bear the cost of any fees associated with that change or cancellation.
- D. If the employee changes personal cellular phone providers, a new contract, bill, and/or proof of service must to provided to the GCHD BOH.
- E. The GCHD will not be responsible for any additional costs if an employee receiving subsidy exceeds their allowed plan minutes, text messages, or data service.
- F. Any additional lines on an employee's plan will be the sole responsibility of the employee and no subsidy will be available.

IV. Public Records

- A. Employees with a phone for which they receive a subsidy should understand that any and all communications related to GCHD business that are conducted on a personal device may be subject to public records requests. This includes, but is not limited to, voice mails, text messages, video, photos, email communications, and instant messages.

V. Expectations

- A. Employees receiving the subsidy shall
 1. Receive GCHD electronic mail to their cellular telephone
 2. Respond to calls of a public safety nature in a timeframe that is appropriate to the nature of the call
 3. Be accessible to GCHD staff and/or other public or private entities or persons
 4. Be responsive to contact made by other officials and/or GCHD staff or members of the general public as appropriate.
 5. Utilize any application deemed necessary or appropriate through the cellular telephone for which a subsidy is being received
 6. Maintain data exchanged through the cellular telephone as appropriate for public records retention.

VI. Use of Devices Generally

- A. Employees shall not attempt to use their cellular telephones in an unsafe or illegal manner while operating GCHD/city vehicles or privately owned vehicles (POV's) while conducting GCHD business and shall not waste work time talking or texting to family, friends, or conducting other non-work-related business during regular working hours. Employees may use their cellular telephones for personal use while on authorized work breaks in designated areas, provided this does not interfere with operations nor extend the employee's authorized break period. If the employee has an emergency situation requiring him/her to remain in contact with the hospital, doctor, or a family member, the employee may request in advance that the Health Commissioner temporarily suspend the above restrictions.
- B. Any employee observed using any cell phone or other device inconsistent with this section, including texting or otherwise operating devices while driving, shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- C. Use of any device in any manner contrary to local, state, or federal laws will constitute misuse and will result in immediate termination of the cellular telephone subsidy.

VII. Cellular Telephones and Administrative Investigations

- A. Employees who elect to utilize their cellular telephones during work hours shall provide telephone usage records during administrative investigations, when requested. These records shall be for dates and times of working hours.
- B. Employees shall produce personal cellular telephone records during administrative investigations regardless of the time of usage when the usage concerns an allegation of misconduct that is "directly, narrowly and specifically related to the employee's performance of duty or fitness to perform."
- C. Any employee who has a question regarding the use of this policy should request clarification of the GCHD policy before risking possible violation.

CONTRIBUTORS

The following staff contributed to the authorship of this document:

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SIGNATURES



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Date