

## 3.16 Mobile Wireless Device Policy

### Policy Statement

This policy has been designed to balance government's need for effective telecommunication capabilities with its need to protect privacy and demonstrate fiscal responsibility in the conduct of government business.

### Definitions

#### **MOBILE WIRELESS DEVICE**

For the purpose of this policy the term mobile wireless device refers to any wireless device used to remotely access wireless voice or data services via cellular service providers. Mobile wireless devices include, but are not limited to: cell phones, smartphones and mobile broadband modems. Mobile wireless should not be confused with wireless local area networks (LANs) that are used to connect computers to our networks and do not use cellular technology.

#### **CELL PHONE**

Cell phones (more formally referred to as cellular phones) provide voice communications and also provide text messaging via Short Message Service (SMS). Certain models may also provide other functionality such as Internet access.

#### **SMARTPHONE**

A smartphone is a large-screen handheld device that offers both full cell phone functions, digital camera, music, and tablet functionality. Smartphones provide access to the government e-mail and calendar system, voice communications, text messaging via SMS, Internet access, application access and other services.

#### **MOBILE BROADBAND MODEM**

A mobile broadband modem provides WiFi connectivity or plugs into a laptop or desktop computer and provides Internet access to data via a cellular service provider.

#### **ACCESSORIES**

Accessories for mobile wireless devices include hands-free devices, chargers, speakers, carrying cases and other items.

### **USAGE FEES**

In addition to one-time charges and the recurring monthly mandatory connect charges, users of mobile wireless devices may incur additional fees based on the type and quantity of usage. The usage fees may be at an additional fixed monthly rate or on a metered per-usage basis.

### **APPLICATION**

Applications, sometimes referred to simply as “apps”, are a type of software that can be downloaded to a wireless device to extend its functionality. Some applications are free while others must be purchased outright or subscribed to for a monthly fee.

### **APPROVING AUTHORITY**

The person approving the procurement of mobile wireless devices is generally the person responsible for the cost centre to which charges will be billed. An organization may choose to elevate this approval to a higher level such as the deputy head.

## **Policy Objectives**

Proper implementation of this policy will achieve the following objectives:

- minimize the cost to deliver appropriate mobile wireless service
- provide guidance as to when it is appropriate to issue a mobile wireless device and what type of device should be issued
- ensure consistency and accountability in mobile wireless device approval processes
- educate employees who have been issued a mobile wireless device so that they can assist in meeting government’s cost control objectives
- provide guidance for employees on the acceptable use of government-issued mobile wireless devices.

## **Policy Directives**

### **I. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES**

The goal of these guidelines is to limit costs by limiting the number of mobile wireless devices in use to those for which there is a strong business case. Eligibility to receive a device is ultimately at the discretion of the approving authority, as determined by each government organization, but must be based on work requirements related to the employee’s job function. The following are presented as general guidelines as to which employees may be eligible to receive a mobile wireless device:

- a. Senior management, or selected staff, required to be readily accessible on short notice – as determined by each deputy head.

- b. Mobile workers – staff whose job description mandates that they be away from their primary work location for a significant part of the workday to perform duties or visit clients. Frequent attendance of meetings at or near the worker’s primary location typically does not constitute mobile worker status.
- c. Critical workers – staff, and their immediate supervisors, who are, or may be required to respond immediately to emergency situations or business continuity requirements.
- d. On-call workers – staff who must be available after normal work hours as part of their work duties.
- e. Personal Health and Safety – staff working in situations in which they travel alone or are isolated from other staff and/or there is a potential situation where their personal safety or health may be threatened.

## **2. MOBILE WIRELESS DEVICE PROCUREMENT**

Assuming that the intended mobile wireless device user meets eligibility criteria, as in (1) above, the lowest cost mobile wireless device, accessories and recurring charges that meets the user’s requirements must be chosen. The ICT Services, IT Asset Management group within the Department of Internal Services can provide guidance in the selection of mobile wireless devices.

Once a mobile wireless device has been selected, the intended user must inform, and get explicit approval from, the approving authority for the full cost of the device, any accessories, and any recurring charges such as voice or airtime packages, special features or applications.

Upgrading of a mobile wireless device must only take place if the device is being replaced due to loss or damage or if the user has a clear work requirement for a new functionality only available by upgrading or the device is no longer supported by the manufacturer, the software on the mobile device can no longer be updated with current operating system or security updates.

## **3. ACCEPTABLE USE**

Mobile wireless devices are issued by government for the purpose of conducting government business in an efficient and effective manner. Users are accountable for appropriate and responsible use of government issued mobile wireless devices including the following:

- a. Users are required to reimburse government for personal use that incurs additional charges. These additional charges could be the result of long distance

calls, data usage, and text messaging made while outside of Canada or to countries outside of North America. The only exceptions to the above are:

- i. cases of emergency
- ii. users who are away from their primary work location on government business, or who are on call, may make brief and occasional local phone calls on their mobile wireless device to attend to personal matters.
- b. users must not activate applications (where there is a charge) on their mobile wireless devices unless the application is related to work requirements and only with approval from their approving authority.
- c. users must not activate external services that send messages to their mobile wireless devices unless the service is related to work requirements and has been approved by their approving authority.
- d. mobile wireless devices must not be used for personal business ventures, illegal activities, or in any manner contrary to government policy.
- e. the province is not responsible for any data on mobile devices that is stored on the local device as a result of occasional personal use (pictures, personal apps, personal contacts) as this device is for work purposes and is the property of the province.
- f. mobile wireless devices are only to be used by the person to whom they are assigned.
- g. excessive, inappropriate, or illegal use of mobile wireless devices may result in disciplinary action being taken.

#### **4. SECONDMENTS, TRANSFERS, EXITING EMPLOYEES AND LEAVE**

##### **Secondments or Transfers within the Government of Nova Scotia**

Mobile Wireless devices being used by employees seconded or transferred to other Government departments, agencies, or offices should be transferred with the employee. Precautions and procedures must be in place to ensure the unit is wiped of any information that is considered confidential and/or a record of the former office. Transfer of the device must also be managed in the Government inventory system. Requests to take a Mobile Wireless device's telephone number outside of government will not be approved due to privacy concerns.

##### **Secondments outside of the Government of Nova Scotia or Exiting Employees**

Employees accepting secondments to external agencies or the Federal Government or employees no longer employed by the Government of Nova Scotia must return the mobile wireless device to his/her former office with the Government of Nova Scotia. Requests to take a Mobile Wireless device's

telephone number will not be approved due to privacy concerns.

**Long-Term Leave: Deferred Leave, Maternity Leave, other Leaves of Absence**

Employees on long-term leave, deferred leave, maternity leave, or other leaves of absence are deemed to be not working and therefore do not require access to the Government network. These employees must return the mobile wireless device to his/her former office with the Government of Nova Scotia.

Deputy Head approval is required for employees to retain their mobile wireless device while on leave.

## **Policy Scope**

This policy applies to all Nova Scotia government departments, offices and agencies in Category 1 as defined by the Corporate Administrative Policy Manuals Policy (Policy 1.2, 100 Management Guide).

## **Policy Guidelines**

It is the policy of government to supply all mobile wireless device users with a copy of the acceptable use directive contained herein whenever the user receives a new or upgraded device.

## **Responsibilities**

The ICT Services branch of the Department of Internal Services is responsible for providing recipients of wireless devices with written procedures (<https://ctservices.novascotia.ca/assystnet/application.jsp#serviceOfferings/267>) to follow in the event of loss and for responding to the loss of wireless devices.

### **MOBILE WIRELESS DEVICE USERS**

- All users are responsible for providing approving authorities with the full cost of proposed mobile wireless devices and monthly service costs before acquiring a new or replacement device or when adding addition services that incur recurring charges.
- All users are responsible for complying with the acceptable use guidelines contained herein.
- All users are responsible for immediately reporting the loss of mobile wireless devices and taking appropriate action as prescribed by ICT Services.
- All users are responsible for reimbursing government for personal use that incurs additional charges as defined in section 3.a above.

- All users are responsible for complying with wireless privacy policy. See: *Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act* under Related Legislation.

#### **APPROVING AUTHORITIES**

- Approving authorities must comply with the eligibility guidelines contained herein.
- Approving authorities should review eligibility on an annual basis to ensure that staff who have been issued a mobile wireless device continue to merit it.
- Approving authorities must request and review the full cost of the mobile wireless device (hardware and all monthly charges) before approving the acquisition and issuance of the device.
- Approving authorities are responsible for overall monitoring of mobile wireless expenditures and responding to any suspected inappropriate or excessive use of wireless devices they have approved.
- Approving authorities are responsible for referring mobile wireless device users to the policy and guidelines whenever a new or replacement device is approved.

#### **Related legislation**

*Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act*

<<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/persinfo.htm>>

#### **Enquiries**

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