

SYSTEM REGULATION

25.99.08 Use of Telecommunication Service

May 29, 1997

Revised October 17, 1997

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1. Workplace telecommunication service includes desk and cellular telephones, facsimile (fax), e-mail, and internet connections. Non-business usage that results in any direct cost to the state or the component is not allowed. Non-business use of local telecommunication service is permitted as long as that use is of minimal time and duration, does not impede agency function, and does not result in additional cost to the state. In the event that it is necessary for an employee to incur an additional charge from a System telephone, facsimile, e-mail, or internet connection for non-business use, a personal calling card, collect, or third-party charge should be used. No non-business collect calls should be charged to a System telephone. (See also System Policy 33.04, Uses of System Property.) If the non-business usage of telecommunication services results in a direct cost to the state for any reason, it is the employee's responsibility to reimburse the component as shown in paragraph 2 of this regulation. The use of telecommunication service for private, commercial purposes is strictly prohibited regardless of whether or not it results in an additional charge to the state.
2. System components have the responsibility to monitor telecommunication service usage by each employee. Universities, agencies and the health science center will establish rules and/or procedures to ensure compliance with Paragraph 1 of this regulation including review of the telecommunication service charges by departments and employees. If the non-business use of telecommunication service results in a direct cost to the component, the charge should be identified and the full direct cost should be reimbursed by the employee. This reimbursement should include the appropriate charges and any applicable taxes and fees. Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 372 allows for "personal use of telephones or computer services as long as the state is reimbursed for any direct costs incurred" and that the use "does not impede agency functions."
3. The restrictions in the preceding paragraph are not intended to disallow the sales of long-distance services to students and employees on a campus, providing all of the following conditions are met: (1) the campus telecommunications system is capable of separately tracking these long-distance calls, (2) federal excise taxes and any applicable state and local taxes and charges are properly calculated and charged to users, and (3) those taxes and charges are properly remitted to the taxing authority.

4. In System locations where long-distance calls are not automatically routed, employees may have the option of selecting non-TEX-AN long-distance services. It is the intent of the Legislature that state employees may be held liable for the cost difference between a non-network call and a TEX-AN call, unless one of the following conditions is met: (1) the Chief Executive Officer certifies to the State Comptroller that an emergency exists, or (2) The Texas A&M University System determines the non-network call is the most effective, or (3) TEX-AN is not available. Telephone directories at these locations should alert employees to their liability in this regard.

CONTACT OFFICE: System Office of Budgets and Accounting

HISTORY: Last version: September 20, 1999

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