

GEORGE MUNICIPALITY

CELL PHONE ALLOWANCE POLICY 2023/24

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1. PREAMBLE

- a) The GEORGE MUNICIPALITY continuously endeavours to achieve best practice policies and procedures when managing the administration and operations of the Municipality.
- b) In order to enable and enhance the productivity of the municipality it is recognised that cellular telephones are useful communication tools which are essential for service delivery and advancement in terms of recent technology. Based on this, cellular phones are allocated for sound business reasons, primarily for receiving business calls and making business calls when not located in the office.
- c) The purpose of this Policy is to provide for and regulate the use of cellular telephones by employees of the GEORGE MUNICIPALITY, who for operational reasons, are required to be available/ contactable and responsive.
- d) This document is an enhanced compilation of all previous discussion on cell phone policy and further provides for:
 - i. Fair criteria in the evaluation of application for cellular telephone allowance
 - ii. Standardized documentation upon application
 - iii. Uniform guidelines in respect of processes, usage, management and maintenance thereof
 - iv. Guidelines for the renewal and increase of cellular telephone allowance
- e) The guiding principles used in developing the GEORGE MUNICIPALITY Cell Phone Policy were sourced from the following legislation and policies:
 - i. Government Notice No. R 1271 (Government Gazette No. 39548, 21 December 2015)
 - ii. Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003
 - iii. Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act 20 of 1998, section 7(3)
 - iv. Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998
 - v. Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000
 - vi. GEORGE MUNICIPALITY Subsistence and Travel Policy
- f) This Policy revokes all previous cellular telephone allowance policies.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a) Municipality means the GEORGE MUNICIPALITY.
- b) Executive Mayor means an executive mayor elected in terms of section 55 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998.
- c) Speaker means a speaker elected in terms of section 36 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998.
- d) Mayoral Committee means a mayoral committee member elected in terms of section 60 of the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998.
- e) Accounting Officer / Municipal Manager means a person appointed by the municipality in terms of section 82 of the Municipal Structures Act and who is the Head of Administration and the Accounting Officer for the Municipality.
- f) Director / Head of Department means a person appointed by the municipality in terms of section 56 and 57 of the Municipal Systems Act and who is the Head of a department within the GEORGE MUNICIPALITY.
- g) Task Level 15 and up means an employee appointed by the GEORGE MUNICIPALITY on these task level as Manager / Head of the Section at Management Level.

Other Personnel means any other personnel appointed by the GEORGE MUNICIPALITY on task levels 3 to 14.

3. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

Applications for use of cellular phones and the payment of cell phone allowances will be considered for the following officials:

- 3.1 All Councillors of the Municipality
- 3.2 Municipal Manager
- 3.3 Directors
- 3.4 Deputy Directors reporting to Directors
- 3.5 Employees who perform duties or standby duties which necessitate communication as and when approved by the Manager or his nominee, subject that sufficient funds are available on the budget.

4. MANAGEMENT RULES

- 4.1 All Councillors and officials must acquire their own/ private cellular phone.
- 4.2 The user may structure a cellular package that best suites his/her needs, based on personal circumstances. The Municipality recognizes that cell phones are an extension of individuality.
- 4.3 The contract is between the user and the service provider and the user is liable for the payment thereof.
- 4.4 A cell phone allowance that is affected through the payroll system is a taxable allowance and should not be construed as inclusive of a negotiated remuneration package.
- 4.5 The user is responsible for insuring the phone against theft, loss or damage and ensures that the cell phone is available for the municipality's use at all times, failing which the user will sacrifice the allowance.
- 4.6 An allowance will not be granted to employees with no official authorisation to acquire a cell phone for official use. The municipality will not be liable for any costs where an employee obtained a private cellular contract without prior official authorization.
- 4.7 Maintenance and insurance of cellular phones is for the cost of each user.
- 4.8 The user must make the cellular telephone number available for publication on the telephone list of GEORGE MUNICIPALITY and may forfeit such an allowance if number is not available for official use. A list of cell phone users within the Municipality, depicting the post designation will be updated annually.
- 4.9 Users that receive an allowance must activate voicemail facility of the phone and respond to voice messages as soon as possible.
- 4.10 In instances where/ when accessing the network, e-Mail, internet and other facilities outside office, employees must use the 3G card made available to those with prior approval. (IT policy is applicable).
- 4.11 All cellular allowance will be attached to the allowances applicable on Councillors as from time to time determined and approved, in terms of the Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act 20 of 1998 issued yearly.
- 4.12 In cases of high-risk areas, the use of such cellular phone is at the discretion of the individual.

- 4.13 Telephone allowances or telephone contracts will be forfeited in the case of proven negligence.
- 4.14 The use of cellular phones must improve the effective communication between supervisor and sub-ordinate.
- 4.15 It is also considered to be the best alternative compared to other forms of communication.
- 4.16 Constant contact with the office must be maintained during office hours;
 - 4.16.1 In cases of theft or loss of equipment, insurance excess will be paid by the employee
 - 4.16.2 Itemise billing for at least 3 months must be provided with application for allowance
 - 4.16.3 The Director / U-key holder must make sure that the necessary funding is available on the annual operating budget
 - 4.16.4 All cell phone allowances must be reviewed and signed off by the Director at the start of the financial year

5. CAR-KIT/BLUETOOTH INSTALLATION

- 5.1. Car-kit/ Bluetooth installation is optional and for the employees' own account.
- 5.2. The Municipality will not be held liable for any damages and/or injuries caused by accidents or traffic fines which are directly or indirectly the result of the use of the cellular phone whilst traveling in a motor vehicle.

6. GENERAL RULES

Cell phone allowances will be provided as follows:

DESIGNATION	AMOUNT (ALLOWANCE PER MONTH PRE-TAX)
Councillors	As per Remuneration of Public Officers Annual Upper Limits Gazette
Municipal Manager	R3,400
Senior Managers (Sec 56 & 57) / Directors	R3,400
Staff on Task grade 17 and above	Maximum R1 000 subject to Director's Approval
Staff on Task grade 15 & 16	Maximum R700 subject to Director's Approval

DESIGNATION	AMOUNT (ALLOWANCE PER MONTH PRE-TAX)
Staff on Task grade 12 to 14	Maximum R500 subject to Director's Approval
Exceeding the above maximum thresholds for exceptional cases due to operational requirements	Maximum R1 200 subject to Director's Recommendation and MM Approval
All other officials upon recommendation of Director and approval of Accounting Officer	Between R100 and R500 depending on usage requirements
No retrospective adjustments to amounts will be implemented as a result of the review of this policy. Only prospective adjustments may be made.	

6.1. The abovementioned amounts will be reviewed annually by the Budget Committee.

7. OTHER PARTICIPANTS RECEIVING AN OFFICIAL CELL PHONE FROM THE MUNICIPALITY

- 7.1. The municipality may determine that it is to the best interest of Council that a cell phone be provided for a specific post, the municipality will provide a basic phone plus contract in the value, as determined by the relevant Manager.
- 7.2. A cell phone will be provided by the municipality, which cell phone will remain the property of the municipality.
- 7.3. An amount to be determined in each individual case (including VAT) including insurance will be paid towards the account and any calls in excess thereafter will be for the employee's account.
- 7.4. The amounts mentioned in 7.3 above will be determined by the relevant Manager.
- 7.5. Insurance of the cell phone will be for the municipality's account.
- 7.6. In case of theft or loss the excess will be for the account of the user of the phone at the time of the incident.
- 7.7. Repairs due to negligence will be for the account of the participant.
- 7.8. The abovementioned contract value will be reviewed annually by the relevant Senior Manager.
- 7.9. Cell phone details including PUK Code, IMEI code, value of phone must be submitted to the insurance office within two days after acceptance of the phone.

7.10. The Municipality will be phasing out all municipality provided cell phones as contracts expire. The user will have to obtain his own cell phone and apply for cell phone allowance.

8. SERVICE PROVIDER

8.1. The Service Provider will be identified by the Chief Financial Officer or his nominee through the supply chain management system every two years or a shorter period if he/she deems it necessary that a shorter period be approved in the municipality's interest.

8.2. This section will only be applicable where cell phones are allocated to specific posts and the contracts need to be upgraded.

9. EFFECTIVE DATE

9.1. The policy will come into effect from 1 July 2023.

10. PAYMENT OF CALLS

10.1. Any amount on the monthly itemised billing which exceeds the approved allowance must be paid by the employee, except in the case where such excess is regarded as official business in the opinion of the Municipal Manager or his nominee.

11. OFFICIAL USAGE OF THE CELLULAR PHONE

11.1. Employees who are included in the scope of application for the allocation of cellular allowances or phones must ensure that such cellular phones will be activated and available at all times.

11.2. If the cellular phone is not activated after official working hours, employees who are included in the scope of application for the allocation of cellular allowances or phones, should ensure that a telephone line is available where such employees could be contacted when deemed necessary.

11.3. Should it not be possible to provide a telephone line as contemplated in 10.2 *supra*, the voice mail facility of the cellular phone should be activated in order to ensure contact when deemed necessary.

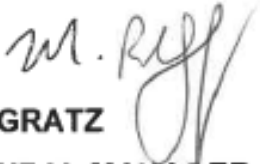
12. RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the relevant Manager to control the implementation of the policy, whilst the administration and control over cellular phones will rest with the Chief Financial Officer.

CELL PHONE ALLOWANCE POLICY

This Policy is effective from the date of approval by the Council, as per the approved system of Delegations of the George Municipality.

Signed at GEORGE on 12th day of **June 2023**.



DR M GRATZ
MUNICIPAL MANAGER