

PINE BLUFF POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

	USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES- CELL PHONES	POLICY NUMBER 116
		ISSUE DATE JANUARY 16, 2024
	CHAPTER: ADMINISTRATION & PERSONNEL	EFFECTIVE DATE FEBRUARY 19, 2024
	ISSUED By: Chief of Police Denise Richardson	TOTAL PAGES 5

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide full time law enforcements officers, part time law enforcement officers, civilian staff, and volunteers, with guidelines for the proper use of cellular phones.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this law enforcement agency to use cellular phones/cell phones in the course of police operations to enhance departmental communication. Cell phones may be used by officers to conduct official business when the use of radio communication or hard - line telephones is inappropriate, unavailable, or inadequate to meet communication needs and when the cell phone is used in accordance with this policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITY: Any time that cell phone operations by any means, including but not limited to voice, text, e-mail, scrolling, browsing, or internet transmission, would be considered disruptive, such as in meetings, trainings sessions, court, or public places when their use would reasonably be deemed annoying and intrusive.

DISTRACTION: Any time the use of a cell phone by any means, including but not limited to voice, text, e-mail, scrolling, browsing, or internet transmission,

would unnecessarily or unreasonably divert the attention of an officer from official duties and/or cause a potentially hazardous situation.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. DEPARTMENT OWNED CELL PHONES

1. Cell phones are authorized for official police business. Exceptions may be made for family situations or personal matters that require attention and where alternative forms of communication are not suitable or easily available.
2. Cell phones may be used in off-duty capacities only for the conduct of police-related business or during departmentally managed off duty law enforcement assignments.
3. Cell phones are an augmentation to the department's communication system, and not a substitute for radio communication designated for transmission through the department's emergency communication center, Mobile Data Terminals or office telephones. Approved cellular telephone usage includes but is not limited to the following types of communications:
 - a. Conveyance of sensitive or restricted information
 - b. Undercover operations
 - c. Lengthy communication with supervisors or headquarters personnel
 - d. Communication beyond normal radio range
 - e. Incidents in which direct contact with an officer and the public is critical
 - f. Incidents in which use of a hardline telephone would be appropriate but where one is not available.
4. Cell phones or cell phone numbers should not normally be provided to members of the public. Exceptions may be made when immediate future contact between an officer and a victim, witness, or other person may be critical.
5. Personnel may not provide the cellular phone number of any member of this agency to a member of the public without the cell phone user's authorization.

6. Officers should use hands free options when operating department vehicles while using cellular phones unless emergency circumstances exist and other means of communication are not available.
7. Cell phone accessories and downloads require approval from the IT-Information Technology personnel.
8. Any financial charges incurred by cell phone use outside of the contracted agreement shall be the responsibility of the responsible officer; unless prior written approval from IT or Command Staff has been secured.
9. Random and periodic audits of departmentally issued cell phone use may be made at the department's discretion.
10. All employees issued a cell phone by the Pine Bluff Police Department shall:
 - a. Ensure the phone is charged.
 - b. Keep the phone on at all times except in those circumstances where it may be considered disruptive or distractive.
 - c. Keep the phone on their persons or close enough to their person to answer a call.
 - d. Respond to all calls related to city operations within a reasonable length of time.
 - e. Be responsible for the accountability and proper care of the cell phone as well as the proper usage, and any accessories that the employee is issued associated with the cell phone.
11. Cell phones issued to department employees by other agencies, jurisdictions, or entities, shall for all intents and purposes be governed by the same policy and procedures as one issued from this department.

B. PERSONAL CELL PHONES

1. Personal or departmentally issued cell phones should not be used if they may be disruptive to others. Photo messaging capabilities are prohibited unless they can be clearly linked to the conduct of official police business.

2. Employees utilizing personal cell phones while on duty are reminded that their personal cell phones are not an approved department communication device for some law enforcement purposes but can be used for communication between supervisors and officers if the supervisor so agrees. Officers who are not issued department cell phones and own a personal cell phone, will answer all such phone calls from supervisors or be subject to disciplinary action.

C. USAGE GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

1. Members will use good judgment when using cell phones for legitimate police business.
2. Members will check for voice mail messages on a daily basis at a minimum, or as their work schedule dictates, to ensure that any outstanding messages are returned in a timely manner.
3. Members shall not use the department issued cell phones for calls related to the member's private gain, profit or personal business enterprise.
4. Members shall not use the department issued cell phones for calls that could be considered as prank calls, obscene, threatening, demeaning, harassing, annoying or otherwise offensive in nature.

D. USAGE GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING PERSONAL BUSINESS

1. Personal use of department issued cell phones for both incoming and outgoing calls should be limited to infrequent, incidental and/or emergency use. **Members are reminded that cell phone records are subject to public disclosure under Arkansas' Freedom of Information Act.**
2. Members should first seek alternatives for necessary personal cell phone calls including land telephone lines or using a personal cell phone.
3. Members shall not use the department issued cell phone for placing calls to 900 numbers, movie links, and call-in sports or talk radio shows, etc.
4. Members of this department shall not utilize department issued cell phone in any manner, on or off duty, which brings public criticism and causes management or supervisory personnel to conduct an

investigation that confirms the violations did occur and the employee is culpable of the offense.

5. Members of this department shall not utilize department issued cell phones that are inconsistent, incompatible or in conflict with the values established by this agency negatively affect its reputation and that of its officers.

E. REVIEW AND MONITORING OF CELL PHONE USAGE

1. The Office of Information Technology shall determine whether a particular department issued cell phone needs to be changed from one service plan to another service plan based on review of those detailed billing records. Members and their supervisor/commander will be advised of any resulting changes in their service plan.

F. ANNUAL REVIEW OF CELL PHONE ASSIGNMENTS

The continued need for each department issued cell phone will be reviewed annually.