

# TAMU-T

## Rule

### 25.99.08 Communication Allowance Program



Approved: Pending revision of BOR Policy/System  
Regulation and possible number change  
Next Scheduled Review: Pending

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## Rule Statement

The Communications Allowance Program may be authorized for employment positions which require the use of personal communication devices.

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## Reason for Rule

This rule establishes the Communication Allowance Program and specifies the criteria and process for authorizing eligible positions for participation in the program.

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## Procedures and Responsibilities

### 1. GENERAL

1.1 Texas A&M University-Texarkana recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may be enhanced by the use of personal communication devices. Therefore, a department may elect to monetarily contribute to the employee's purchase and use of personal communication devices (cell phones or personal digital assistants (PDA)) under the provisions of this Rule. Communication allowances will be comprised of two components:

- a) Communication Equipment Allowance which provides a contribution for equipment purchase and activation fees, and
- b) Monthly Communication Plan Allowance, which provides salary supplements for service plans.

1.2 A personal communication device acquired in accordance with the provisions of this Rule is the employee's property and may be used in any way the employee deems appropriate. The Communication Equipment Allowance and Monthly

Communication Plan Allowance are considered taxable compensation subject to required tax withholdings. A Communication Allowance is not an entitlement and is not part of an employee's base salary. The Monthly Communication Plan Allowance will be paid in equal installments as a salary supplement from departmental funds as authorized by the department head.

- 1.3 Departments may not purchase personal communication devices for employees for either business or personal use. The university will not pay departmental telecommunication bills for personal communication devices. Furthermore, the university will not reimburse employees for use of personal communication devices except as allowed for under the provisions of this Rule.

## 2. APPROVAL

- 2.1 Each unit supervisor is responsible for determining which positions require the use of personal communication devices and, therefore, qualify for the Communication Allowance Program. Granting a communication allowance to an employee must be directly linked to the employee's job duties and responsibilities. The unit supervisor submits the request to the appropriate Vice President to recommend approval by the President.
- 2.2 Copies of the approval forms used to process the Communication Equipment Allowance and the Monthly Communication Plan Allowance will be retained in the employee's official personnel file.

## 3. ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION ALLOWANCE AMOUNTS

- 3.1 The Office of the President will annually publish the Communication Equipment Allowance rates for the purchase of cellular telephones, PDA and telephone/PDA combinations. An employee may purchase any such communication equipment, regardless of price; however, the employee will be responsible for any additional expenses above the allowance.
- 3.2 Annually, the Office of the President will calculate and publish the Monthly Communication Plan Allowance rates for cellular telephone and PDA service plans (including provisions for the payment of related taxes and selected calling features).
- 3.3 Each department head is responsible for determining the appropriate Plan Access Limit for an employee's Monthly Communication Plan Allowance based on the responsibilities of the employee's position. Plan Access Limits should include a determination of an appropriate number of plan minutes, long distance calling options and other plan features.

## 4. EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

### 4.1 Reimbursement for Equipment and Activation Fees

- 4.1.1 An employee who acquires communication equipment and services after acceptance into the Communication Allowance Program will receive a reimbursement in an amount up to the established allowances to offset related expenses. Equipment purchases include telephones, PDAs, batteries, hands-free devices, cases, carrying devices, chargers and data cabling. To receive a reimbursement for the purchase of equipment, an employee must submit a copy of the receipt showing proof of purchase. The receipt must be attached to the Communication Equipment Allowance Form.
- 4.1.2 Reimbursements will also be made for activation fees and taxes consistent with the established allowance limits.
- 4.1.3 A department will process reimbursements in accordance with the Communication Equipment Allowance provisions established by the Office of the President. ([Click here to obtain the Communication Equipment Allowance Form.](#))
- 4.1.4 Reimbursements for acquisition of communication equipment will be made no more frequently than once every three years, unless specifically authorized by the President.

### 4.2 Monthly Salary Supplements

- 4.2.1 A contribution toward monthly expenses incurred under a communication service plan (calling plan, calling features, wireless e-mail services, paging services and taxes) will be provided in the form of a monthly salary supplement paid to the employee. The employee will be provided an amount consistent with one of the established communication service allowances.
- 4.2.2 The department will process the monthly salary supplement in accordance with the Monthly Communication Plan Allowance Enrollment provisions established by the Office of the President. ([Click here to obtain the A&M-Texarkana Monthly Communication Plan Allowance Enrollment Form.](#))
- 4.2.3 An employee may elect to enroll in a service plan that exceeds the approved plan limits selected by the department. Regardless of the cost of the plan chosen by the employee, the salary supplement will not exceed the amount approved by the department head. The employee is responsible for payment of all charges to the provider, including any amount that exceeds the salary supplement.

4.2.4 An employee whose allotted Plan Access Limit is routinely exceeded due solely to business use may request an increase in his or her Plan Access Limit. The department will process adjustments made to the Monthly Communication Plan Allowance by submitting a Monthly Communication Plan Allowance Enrollment form reflecting the new contribution rate. ([Click here to obtain the A&M-\*Texarkana\* Monthly Communication Plan Allowance Enrollment form.](#))

#### 4.3 Annual Review Process

4.3.1 During the budget planning cycle, the department head must evaluate the Communication Allowance monthly salary supplement and the appropriateness of previously selected Plan Access Limits and make necessary adjustments. Monthly Communication Plan Allowance salary supplements may be established at any time during a fiscal year.

### 5. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The employee is responsible for the selection of and enrollment in a communication service plan.

5.2 An employee participating in the Communication Allowance Program must provide his or her department head with the phone and/or PDA number of the communication device within five (5) working days of activation.

5.3 The employee is personally responsible for complying with any contract entered into with a communication service provider, including payment of all expenses incurred (including long distance, roaming fees and taxes). In the event that an employee leaves the position that qualified for a Communication Allowance, the employee continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the communication service plan.

5.4 An employee participating in the Communication Allowance Program must notify the department head within five (5) working days of the inactivation of communication service, including due to the loss or theft of the communication equipment.

5.5 An employee participating in the Communication Allowance Program from A&M-*Texarkana* may not receive reimbursement for use of other communication equipment or services. This exclusion does not preclude the use and subsequent payment of charges made on calling cards A&M-*Texarkana* has issued to A&M-*Texarkana* personnel or departments.

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## **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

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System Policy 33.04, Use of System Property

<http://www.tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/33-04.pdf>

System Regulation 25.99.08, Use of Telecommunication Services

<http://www.tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/25-99-08.pdf>

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## **Contact Office**

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Vice President for Finance & Administration – Texas A&M University-Texarkana  
(903) 223-3005