



## **TELEPHONE POLICY**

<b>Date Approved:</b>	
<b>Date Implemented:</b>	

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### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines on the management and use of cellular phones and landlines:-

- To implement a uniform Telecommunications Policy for officials and Councillors respectively;
- To provide fair criteria for the allocation of cellular phone reimbursements;
- To ensure the effective and efficient use of municipal telephones;
- To ensure the recovery of all costs for the unofficial (private) use of cell phones, land lines and fax machines;
- To implement the necessary control measures and reduce costs;
- To ensure that only authorised persons use Council's telephones and facsimile machines in the performance of their duties;
- To prevent the misuse of the above-mentioned facilities by Councillors and officials of the Municipality.

### **2. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY**

2.1 This Policy shall apply to all Councillors and officials of the Municipality, regardless of their designation.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy unless the context otherwise indicates:-

**3.1 "Council"** means the Council of the municipality, any committee or person to which or to whom an instruction has been given or any power has been delegated or sub-delegated in terms of, or as contemplated in, section 59 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 or a service provider in respect of any power, function or duty of the Council.

**3.2 "Councillor"** shall mean a member of the municipal Council of the MUNICIPALITY.

**3.3 "Municipal Manager"** means the person appointed by the Municipal Council as the Municipal Manager for the municipality in terms of section 82 of the Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998) and includes any person to whom the Municipal Manager has delegated a power, function or duty in respect of such a delegated power, function or duty.

**3.4 "Official"** shall mean all persons in the employment of the MUNICIPALITY.

**3.5 "Official Calls"** shall mean all calls made during office hours for the purpose of conducting official Council Business and includes after-hour calls to family members or housemates, calls on arrivals to national and international destinations and in emergencies.

**3.6 "HOD"** shall mean all Section 56 appointees and of the Municipality.

#### **4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

4.1 The Policy includes the following:-

- Land Lines
- Use of Fax machines
- Cellular Phones

#### **5. The Right to use Telephones, Fax Machines and Cellular Phone Facilities**

5.1 Council provides its employees with the above-mentioned facilities primarily for official purposes only.

5.2 The principle is that no Councillor or official of the MUNICIPALITY has the right to use the above-mentioned facilities for private purposes.

#### **6. DELEGATED POWERS**

##### **6.1 The Municipal Manager or delegate inter alia has the following powers:**

- To authorise the installation of telephones and other similar equipment on Council premises.
- To authorise the allocation of cellular phones.

## **6.2 Powers of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**

- The CFO inter alia has the power to make all payments and deductions in accordance with the policies of Council and appropriate legislation.

## **7. TELEPHONE POLICY**

It shall be the responsibility of the Council to provide municipal offices or a combination of municipal offices with reliable telephone and facsimile service.

### **7.1 Restrictions**

- 7.1.1 It is the policy of the MUNICIPALITY that telephones and facsimiles are to be used primarily for official purposes.
- 7.1.2 The Speaker shall determine the level of access to telephones for Councilors for use in the performance of their official duties.
- 7.1.3 The Municipal Manager (or his/her delegate) shall determine which officials may have access and what level of access to telephones in their offices for use in the performance of their official duties.
- 7.1.4 Provision is made for the allocation of a PIN-code to all Councillors and officials within the Municipality. This is to ensure that only Council employees and Councillors utilize official instruments appropriately and to manage the usage of telephones.
- 7.1.5 The PIN-code allocated to a Councillor and official becomes his/her responsibility for safekeeping and guarding because accountability for its use solely remains with them.
- 7.1.6 Councillors and officials are expected to exercise reasonable discretion in using telephones for personal use. Excessive incoming or outgoing personal calls during the workday can interfere with employee productivity and be distracting to others.
- 7.1.7 Personal calls should be kept to a minimum in terms of the number of calls made as well as the duration of calls.
- 7.1.8 Councillors as well as officials are expected to reimburse the Municipality for any calls made in excess of the control measures.
- 7.1.9 The Speaker shall have the discretion to determine which Councilors shall be allowed to make international, national, provincial and cell phone calls only and telephone lines shall be suitably barred on the basis of this classification.
- 7.1.10 The Municipal Manager or his delegate shall have the discretion to determine which officials shall be allowed to make international, national, provincial and cell phone calls only and telephone lines shall be suitably barred on the basis of this classification.

- 7.1.11 The MUNICIPALITY has the right to monitor telephone bills and the usage to determine if misuse or abuse exists.
- 7.1.12 Subject thereto that telephone records be regarded as confidential information and not disclosed to third parties to alleviate liability as regard to the violation of the privacy of individual employees.
- 7.1.13 Officials should use their land lines as far as possible, to minimise the use of Cellular Phones. This applies also to Councillors and officials within the main centres who should be contacted via the dialled extensions (refer to telephone list) in order to reduce costs.
- 7.1.14 Councilors and officials shall only be entitled to make international calls with the specific approval of the Speaker and Executive Management.
- 7.1.15 The Municipal Manager, his or her delegate, after considerations of all *bona fide* operational requirements, may deviate from the provisions of this policy.

## **7.2 Telephone Usage Control Measures**

- 7.2.1 The main centres are linked via dialled extensions (refer to telephone list). Telephone calls made between these centres are regarded as internal.
- 7.2.2 Speed dials for Councillors and officials will be generated in the system to ensure communication at all levels.
- 7.2.3 The Executive Management will determine the different threshold limits for various users of the telephones. e.g. PAs = R500 p.m.
- 7.2.4 At the end of each month, the Manager: Administration shall provide the CFO with a complete list of Councilors and officials who have made telephone calls during the month in question, the destination of such call, the cost incurred and its duration.
- 7.2.5 A detailed statement (printout) of all calls made and the total cost thereof would be provided to all Councillors and officials who exceeded the threshold for the purpose of advising them of how much will be recovered from their salaries.
- 7.2.6 The Councilors and officials will be expected to sign the print outs. Signed printouts should be handed to the Chief Accountant: Creditors and Salaries before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. The costs in respect of private calls will be deducted monthly from staff members' salaries. Refusal to will not remove the authority from the CFO to recover whatever is owed.
- 7.2.7 The executive management (or his/her delegatee) must approve all late submissions.
- 7.2.8 Where no signed printout or approval for late submission has been received, it will be investigated and if necessary disciplinary action will be instituted.
- 7.2.9 The municipality, in compliance with the BCEA, shall deduct any amount due, from an employee in question.
- 7.2.10 All queries regarding landline telephones must be directed to the Municipal Manager or his/her delegate.

7.2.11 Management shall ensure that all office are fully equipped before they are being occupied.

### **7.3 Facsimile Access**

7.3.1 The nature of fax transmissions makes information sent particularly vulnerable to unintended and unauthorized users. As with other communications related to safeguarding confidential information, the MUNICIPALITY must reasonably safeguard information sent by fax.

7.3.2 All official faxes must contain an official cover sheet.

7.3.3 All facsimile facilities are provided in all buildings for the purpose of conducting Council business only.

7.3.4 Facsimile machines may have the ability to dial national numbers. Only those facilities in secure locations may have international access as determined by the Municipal Manager.

7.3.5 The Mayor/Deputy Mayor, Speaker, Municipal Manager/Acting Municipal Manager shall have a direct facsimile facility and telephone lines.

## **8 PROCEDURE**

All Councilors and officials should take reasonable safeguards to protect facsimile communications by:

8.1 Ensuring that facsimile machines are located in an area that is not high in personnel or public traffic and is not within view or accessible to visitors.

8.2 Ensuring that access for certain officials is limited to preserve the protection of confidential information.

8.3 Take reasonable steps to ensure that the fax transmissions/communications are sent to the intended contacts and destinations by:

8.3.1 Refraining from sending highly confidential information via fax.

8.3.2 Double-checking fax numbers before sending.

8.3.3 Ensuring that copies of all faxes must be sent to registry for filing.

## **9. CELLULAR PHONE POLICY FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS**

9.1 Cellular phone allowances, for Municipal Councillors are as determined by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government in terms of the official Government Notice as published annually and of the *Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act (Act no. 20 of 1998)*.

## **10. CELLULAR PHONE POLICY FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS**

10.1 Employees Qualifying for Cellular Phones

- The Municipal Manager will authorise the allocation of cellular phones to officials, according to the operational requirements and the approved policy.

10.2 The following Contracts will be entered into. In each instance the Contract taken must be the most cost effective one. The Contracts include:

10.2.1 Call limit R 2000 Sec 54 and 56

10.2.2 Call limit R 1200 Middle Management, PA's for Mayor, Speaker and Municipal Manager

10.2.3 Call limit R 500 Officers, PA, Mayors Driver and Foremen

## **LANDLINES**

10.2.4 Call limit R1000 Sec 54 & 56

10.2.5 Call limit R 800 Middle Management

10.2.6 Call limit R 500 Officers, PA's,

10.2.7 Call limit R 200 Clerks

10.2.8 Call limit R 1500 Mayor

10.2.9 Call limit R 1000 Deputy Mayor, Speaker and Exco Members

10.2.10 Call limit R 500 Councilors

### **10.3 Business call (with limits)**

- Anything that is in excess of the limit on calls as approved by the Municipal Manager or the policy on cell phones will be recovered from the salary of the employee
- Officials who have been supplied with cell phones must make it a point that they are available 24 hours in cases of emergencies or for work related business.

10.3.1 The CFO, in consultation with the Municipal Manager determines the appropriate contracts for employees as identified in terms of 10.1.

### **10.4 Mayor's Driver**

- A limit as determined by the Municipal Manager will be imposed on this account. The Executive Mayor's Driver will have to pay for the calls in excess of what was approved.

## **11. USE OF OWN / PRIVATE CELLULAR PHONES**

The Municipal Manager or his assignee may consent to an official using his/her own private cellular phone for Council purposes. The Municipal Manager may authorise payment of fixed Cell phone allowance to such employees. Payment of such allowance will be made together with payment of the monthly salary on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

**12. GENERAL**

The purchase of cellular phones will be done by the procurement officer. .

A register for cellular phone must be kept and all details with regard to issuing must be recorded therein.

As soon as a cell phone is issued the issue of the old cell phone must be handled in terms of the directive of the Municipal Manager which can be that the cell phone (handset) is retained by the official or returned as Council property to be disposed in terms of the Supply Chain Policy.

**13. AVAILABILITY OF THIS POLICY**

Every Councilor upon being elected to serve on the Council and staff member that has access to a Council phone, facsimile or Cellular Phone, upon assuming appointment in the service of the MUNICIPALITY, shall be supplied with a copy of this policy and must sign the attached conditions.

**14. CONSEQUENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE**

Failure to comply with this policy will be viewed as a serious disciplinary transgression of the Code of Conduct of the Employees or Councilors.

**15. AMENDMENTS**

The Municipal Manager may from time to time amend this policy.

**16. COUNCIL APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE**

Approval of Policy by Council and Effective date: -----

Municipal Manager

Date

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