



GDOT Publications

Policies & Procedures

Policy: 2310-1- Cell Phones and Other Wireless Communication Devices

Section: General Personnel Policies

Office/Department: Human Resources

Reports To: Human Resources

Contact: 404-631-1000

General

This policy applies to any cell phone or other mobile device that allows its user to make and receive telephone or two-way radio communications, send or receive text messages, access the Internet, read and respond to e-mail, or access audio/video images and sounds. Examples of such devices includes, but are not limited to, wireless phones, two-way radios, laptop or tablet computers, pagers and other similar devices. The policy is applicable whether the device is supplied by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) or is personally owned.

Cell phones and other mobile devices are provided to certain employees to improve customer service, enhance business efficiency and provide safety and/or security while conducting GDOT business. These phones and devices are not considered a personal benefit and shall not be a primary mode of communication, unless they are the most cost-effective means to conduct business.

GDOT advocates safe and responsible driving habits for our employees. This includes not only adherence to traffic laws, speed limits, and use of seat belts, but also to limiting distractions while operating motor vehicles and equipment through the restricted use of cell phones and other mobile devices. The use of cell phones and other mobile devices (GDOT owned or personally owned) is discouraged while operating a motor vehicle and equipment. In accordance with state law, GDOT employees are prohibited from using text messaging, email or any similar form of electronic communication while operating any motor vehicle or equipment.

Use of Cell phones and mobile devices while driving Non-Commercial and Commercial vehicles under 26, 001 GVRW

GDOT employees are discouraged from making wireless calls while operating a motor vehicle or equipment on GDOT business. Safety is GDOT's main priority and employees are strongly encouraged to pull over to a safe location prior to using a communication device for talking. If an employee must make or receive calls for business purposes while driving, they should keep all calls brief, should utilize hands-free technology and should not make or receive any call that distracts them from driving or operating equipment.

Employees are prohibited from using any mobile device to access video content while driving or operating equipment. Use of GPS units or mobile devices for driving directions is allowed if the unit is programmed prior to operating the vehicle.

Emergency calls placed to 911 or other emergency services personnel for situations such as a fire, traffic accident, road hazard or medical emergency are allowed. In such cases, the communication should be as short as reasonably necessary to communicate the nature of the emergency, location, etc. Calls during emergency situations such as inclement weather where it is not practical to leave the roadway due to performance of the employee's duties are also allowed.

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Use of Cell phones and mobile devices while driving for vehicles Commercial vehicles over 26, 001 GVRW

In accordance with Section 40-6-241.2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, employees who possess a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) and operate a commercial motor vehicle over 26,001 Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVRW) are prohibited from holding a wireless device while driving; using more than a single button on a wireless telecommunications device to start or end a call; or, reaching for a wireless device in a manner that requires the driver to maneuver so that he or she is no longer in a seated driving position.

Driver's may use a wireless Bluetooth earpiece device to start, receive or end calls while operating a commercial vehicle over 26, 001 GVRW.

Other Cell Phone and Mobile Device Usage

Use of the audio and video capabilities should only be used for work related purposes. (*e.g.*, pictures taken during field inspections, etc.) Use of cell or mobile devices (regardless of whether it is a personal or GDOT issued device) to take pictures or video of co-workers or business associates is prohibited without the express permission of the co-worker or other individual. Taking video, pictures or audio recordings may constitute an invasion of others' personal privacy, or may breach confidentiality or other protected information. Therefore, the use of such features on cell phones and other wireless communication devices on Department property is prohibited without prior approval. Any pictures or video taken with a GDOT issued phone are the property of GDOT and any content contained on such devices may be subject to review under the State's Open Records Act or during litigation.

Employees who send inappropriate or harassing text messages to coworkers or others connected to the Department may be in violation of the Standards of Conduct Policy ([2255-1](#)) and/or the Sexual Harassment Policy ([2880-1](#)). Further, all text messages transmitted on GDOT issued cell phones or other communication devices are subject to review under the State's Open Records Act.

Employees in possession of GDOT cell phones or other wireless communication devices are expected to protect them from loss, damage or theft. Furthermore, they are not to be loaned to others unless directed by an employee's supervisor. Upon separation, or when requested by management, the employee must produce the phone for return or inspection. Employees must present the phone in good working condition within the time period requested. Employees who separate from employment without returning GDOT cell phones/wireless devices or who fail to return GDOT cell phones/wireless devices in good working order will be considered to have left employment on unsatisfactory terms and maybe subject to further action.

The use of all cell phones while running flagging operations or performing other duties that requires the employee's constant attention to protect employees and traveling public is strictly prohibited.

Use of Employee Owned Cell Phones and Hand Held Devices

Subject to the limitations outlined in this policy, employees may carry personal cell phones or other mobile devices with them while working; however, they are required to exercise the same discretion in using those devices as is expected for the use of the Department's desktop phones. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with employee productivity and may be distracting to others. Therefore, excessive use of personal cell phones for personal business during duty hours is not allowed. Because cell phones are potentially disruptive in the work place, supervisors may prohibit cell phone use or require that all phones must be placed on vibrate or silent mode to avoid distractions. Furthermore, the Department is not liable for the loss, damage or theft of personal cell phones or

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other wireless communication devices brought into the workplace. The privilege of using personal cell phones or other mobile devices may be withdrawn at the supervisor's discretion.

Individual Responsibilities

Employees who are charged with traffic violation(s) resulting from the use of a cell phone or other mobile device, while driving a GDOT/State vehicle will be responsible for any fines related to such violation

Supervisors of employees with cell phones or other mobile devices are responsible for ensuring that their employees understand the requirements of this policy. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

References:

O.C.G.A. 40-6-241.2

History:

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