



BULLOCH COUNTY
COMPUTERS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS USE POLICIES

APPROVED:
APRIL 2006

REVISIONS:
No. 1 - MAY 2008
No. 2 – JUNE 2009

SECTION 1 - ADMINISTRATION

1.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

The following policies govern the use of Bulloch County computer and telecommunications equipment. Equipment owned by, titled to or otherwise controlled by the County is authorized for use in performance of essential duties. However, it is also recognized that some computer and telecommunications equipment may be personally owned and in the custody of employees for legitimate county related business purposes and in some cases an allowance or reimbursement may be granted for such use. Under such circumstances, the employee must adhere to acceptable use policies when such equipment is used for county related business purposes.

1.1 CENTRAL RECORDKEEPING

Financial Administration shall manage, coordinate and maintain listings and inventories of all county-owned computer and telecommunications equipment including purchases, reimbursements and allowances, contracts, call numbers, assignments, invoicing and billing disputes.

1.2 CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Employees shall exercise due care in maintaining, protecting and securing county-owned computer and telecommunications equipment. Equipment shall be maintained in working condition and reports of loss or damage of such equipment shall be made to supervisors immediately. Acquisition and assignment of replacement communications equipment shall be justified by the Department Head to the County Manager or Elected or Appointed Department Heads or their designees, by filling out an appropriate request form.

SECTION 2 – COMPUTERS

2.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Use of any County-owned computer equipment (i.e. personal computers, system terminals, printers, or other peripherals, or any software), shall be for County business purposes only. The employee acknowledges that the County reserves the right to monitor all data, documents, and electronic mail and text messages at any time, with or without notice to the employees. The County Manager, Elected Officials or Department Heads or their designees may periodically audit the storage devices of all computers and reserves the right to clear any and all data not related to County business. Employees may be disciplined up to discharge for improper use of County-owned equipment, or software.

2.1 INSTALLATION OF SOFTWARE ON COUNTY-OWNED EQUIPMENT

All software installed on any County-owned computer system shall be done with the approval of the County Manager's Office, Elected Officials or Department Heads or their designees. All software shall be compliant with license agreements and scanned for viruses prior to installation on either the County's computer networks, or any County-owned computer equipment.

2.2 PERSONAL COMPUTER BACK-UP POLICY

For the protection of the County's computer users, all data, documents, and e-mail and text messages shall be stored on the County's computer networks. If the user desires to store documents on either diskettes, tape, local hard disks, or any other media attached to a personal computer, it is the user's sole responsibility to make back-up copies of the data, documents, text or e-mail messages.

2.3 ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL) – ACCEPTABLE USE

While the County does not currently operate and maintain an internal e-mail system, it does contract with and remit payment to selected providers to enhance communication between employees and outside contacts for business use through the Internet. All computer users shall be given access to the preferred e-mail system providers with the consent of their Department Head only. The use of any such e-mail system shall be for County business use only. The users should be aware that the action to delete data, documents, or e-mail messages does not mean that the data, document, text or e-mail message has been eliminated from the system. No person without specific authorization shall read, alter, or delete the computer files or e-mail of any other person. This applies regardless of whether the computer's operating system permits these acts. Employees may be disciplined up to discharge for improper use of the e-mail system by using any form of derogatory language on the system. The transfer of information via the Internet is not always secure. Any employee preparing to transmit confidential information must do so in writing. Individual users must be aware of, and at all times attempt to prevent potential County liability in their use of the Internet. For that reason, all outgoing messages which do not reflect the official position, or which are confidential in nature to the County or Department must include the following disclaimer:

NOTICE: "This e-mail message and all attachments transmitted with it may contain legally privileged and confidential information intended solely for the use of the

addressee. If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any reading, dissemination, distribution, copying, or other use of this message or its attachments is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately by telephone, facsimile or electronic mail, and delete this message and all copies and backups thereof. The opinions expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the County."

2.4 INTERNET – ACCEPTABLE USE

The Internet is a useful research and communication resource which is provided to County employees for uses related to county business. Access to the Internet provides e-mail capabilities for contacting outside resources and access to databases for research and informational purposes. This policy is applied to ensure that use of the Internet among employees of the County is consistent with all other County policies, all applicable laws, the individual user's job responsibilities, and establishes basic guidelines for appropriate use of the Internet, intended in particular to prevent the misuse of Internet access, specifically as it pertains to the following unacceptable practices. Each individual user is responsible for the appropriate use of this resource. Each department is responsible for ensuring that each user is familiar with the contents of this policy. The Internet must be treated as a formal communications tool like telephone, radio, and video communications. Therefore, each individual user is responsible for complying with this and all other relevant policies when using the County's resources for accessing the Internet. The following are specific use policies:

- a) Authorization: Employee Internet access must be authorized by appropriate supervisory personnel in each County department.
- b) Official County Use Only: Access to the Internet via County equipment can only be used for County related business. The user cannot disrupt or interfere with the work performed by the users of the County's own computer system or misrepresent the interest of the County. Internet access for personal use is prohibited. Resources which are not used for a clear County purpose must not be accessed or downloaded.
- c) Proper and Legal Use: All use of the Internet via County equipment must be in compliance with all applicable laws and policies, in addition to County policies. Internet access via County equipment, therefore, must not be used for illegal, improper, or illicit purposes. While personal use is discouraged, it is recognized that periodic and infrequent e-mails or text messages of a "de minimis" nature during business hours may be acceptable. For example, there may be parents of children who must communicate with schools, doctor visits must be arranged, or similar circumstances of a personal nature arise which cannot be conducted after normal business hours. However, personal use that is excessive in frequency, nature or length that is disruptive to normal work routines is not acceptable. Users shall not use County equipment to attempt any unauthorized use, nor interfere with other user's legitimate use, of any internal or external computer. A wide variety of information is available on the Internet. Some individuals may find some information on the Internet offensive or otherwise objectionable. Individual users should be aware that the County has no control over and can therefore not be responsible for the content of information available on the Internet.
- d) Viruses: Users shall not create, install, or knowingly distribute a computer virus of any kind on any County computer, regardless of whether any demonstrable harm results. Departments shall report all virus outbreaks that have extended beyond a single personal computer to the County Manager, Elected or Appointed Department Heads or an established County Information Systems Department. Information Systems shall be

charged with logging all such outbreaks and the eradication methods used by departments, and will notify other departments in the event of a virus outbreak. In the event of a serious virus outbreak, or in the event of a continued breach of this policy by a department, that department will be disconnected from the Internet and the County's other computer systems until compliance with the Employee Internet Policy is reestablished.

- e) Passwords: The safety and security of the County's computer system and resources must be considered at all times when using the Internet. Users shall not share any password for any County computer or with any unauthorized person, nor obtain any other user's password by any unauthorized means.
- f) Downloading Fee-Based Resources: Resources of any kind for which there is a fee must not be accessed or downloaded without prior approval of a supervisor.

SECTION 3 – TELECOMMUNICATIONS

3.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Employees may be allowed to operate County-owned telecommunications equipment including land-line phones, cellular phones, pagers, radios, walkie-talkies, personal digital assistants and similar devices in compliance with these policies.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a set of guidelines governing the authorized uses of such County-owned equipment, to assure proper maintenance and repair of such equipment, to establish qualifications and responsibilities of users, and to set criteria and conditions for allowances or reimbursement of business use of personal cellular telephones

This policy applies to all users of communications equipment. Employees may be disciplined up to discharge for improper use of County-owned telecommunications equipment, or for falsifying records or documents relating to any claims for allowances or reimbursements.

3.1 AUTHORIZED USE

Criteria for eligibility to acquire County-owned and issued telecommunications equipment shall be based on safety, emergency, and/or efficiency of operations. Acquisition and assignment of new or replenished County-owned telecommunications equipment shall be justified by the Department Head by filling out an appropriate request form (**See Appendix A**) with authorization to be given by the County Manager or his/her designee.

3.2 CELLULAR TELEPHONES: SPECIFICALLY

As a general rule, the preference of Bulloch County is that it shall not own or otherwise provide cellular telephones or related services to its elected officials or employees. Elected Officials, the County Manager and Department Heads are asked to exercise great thought and give careful consideration as to the justification and authorization for business use of any County-owned cellular telephones, or to grant any subsequent monthly allowance or reimbursement for personal cellular telephones.

Exemptions: While the County generally will not provide cellular telephones to elected officials or employees, there are some exceptions to this rule for the purpose(s) of issuance for:

- a) Elected officials, the County Manager, law enforcement officers authorized by the County Sheriff, and public safety executives who require a cellular telephone for making and receiving phone calls while in transit which are:
 1. Critical to the immediate safety of life and/or property.
 2. Where any delayed communication would cause a significant interruption in delivery of services.
 3. Where the failure to possess a county-issued cellular telephone would have or create a major negative economic impact to the County.
- b) When a departmental cellular telephone pool is authorized when it can be clearly

demonstrated that other telecommunications equipment is not feasible or effective for short-term events use or where the performance of job duties occur while in transit or outside of the county.

- c) Emergency or disaster recovery purposes where cellular telephones are required for the protection of life and property.
- d) Installation in emergency vehicles required for such tasks as prisoner transports, ambulances, rescue, and hazardous materials operations.

Allowances or Reimbursements: It is recognized that most employees may need to use cellular telephones to conduct legitimate County business and such use is a predictable necessity. Justification of a monthly amount for an allowance or reimbursement for one (1) cellular telephone per employee or elected official (noting that any member of the Board of Commissioners may only be granted an allowance as provided by state statutes related to their compensation) is required. The County will provide a cellular telephone allowance or reimbursement for business purposes, subject to the following procedures:

- a) Authorization Criteria: The Department must first authorize the users of their personal cellular telephone for County business to receive a monthly allowance at a level based on the scoring or rating criteria provided in **Appendix A**. An amount exceeding the minimum level of monthly allowance or reimbursement may apply to employees or elected officials whose needs meet certain criteria. Requests for reimbursement for convenience will not be approved.
- b) Authorization Procedure: The authorization form shall be signed by the employee's supervisor with a copy retained by both the employee and the department. The authorization will also identify the employee's personal cellular telephone number and be submitted to the Finance Director and payroll. The Department Head is responsible for notifying Financial Administration of allowance or reimbursement amounts and changes in allowance or reimbursement amounts or eligibility.
- c) Allowance or Reimbursement Procedure: The employee is responsible for turning in the first page of his/her cellular telephone bill to document that the employee still has the cellular telephone to their supervisor before the end of each month. Payments to the employee may be treated either as a taxable allowance or a nontaxable reimbursement based on applicable tax laws and the advice of qualified tax advisors.
- d) Termination: The employee and/or department head is responsible for notifying Financial Administration if the employee no longer needs a cellular telephone for their job due to change in responsibilities, revocation due to inappropriate or unacceptable use explained in Section 3.4, or termination.
- e) Equipment Purchase Allowance: Whenever a new employee is authorized for an allowance or reimbursement where they have no phone, they are responsible for contracting with a cellular telephone service provider, and to pay for the initial purchase and plan charges of the cellular telephone itself; and, for paying the plan's monthly bills. The County will pay an initial allowance or reimbursement for the purchase of the communication instrument equal to 50% of the purchase price of the instrument, but not to exceed \$125 for PDA's (personal digital assistants) and \$75 for non-PDA instruments. The employee must submit a purchase receipt or invoice itemizing the purchase price of the instrument. The cellular phone acquired by the employee is considered to be the personal property of the employee and accordingly shall be used in any way the employee deems appropriate. Any service contract the employee might enter into regarding the acquisition or operation of the cell phone is

personal to the employee. The County shall have no obligation or make any guarantees with respect to such contract to the employee or the service provider.

- f) 36-Month Provision: An employee is eligible to receive this purchase allowance or reimbursement every thirty-six (36) months if they choose to upgrade their communication instrument. Effective upon the date of Policy Revision #1, employees eligible for cellular telephone allowances may assume personal custody of their then county-owned cellular instruments, but, may not replace their cellular instrument under the thirty-six (36) month replacement allowance provision; unless they can demonstrate that the current instrument is eligible.
- g) Adjustments: The allowance or reimbursement amounts will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Commissioners and may be adjusted to reflect changes in available rate plans /and instrument costs.

Safety: As more county employees are using cellular phones, it is important both for safety and for the image of county drivers that common sense and courtesy be followed in using cellular phones. Supervisors will have the authority to restrict or prohibit use of cellular phones at any time on the job when they consider such situations and use may present a safety hazard to the employee, co-worker, contractors, and/or to the general public and private property.

The following guidelines are recommended for cellular telephone use while driving a County vehicle or personal vehicle on County business:

- a) Employees who have voice mail service and hands-free equipment for the phone should make best efforts to use both to avoid distractions.
- b) In the event your phone does not have voice mail service and/or hands-free equipment, make sure the phone is easy to see and reach. Place the phone in your vehicle where you can reach it without removing your eyes from the road.
- c) It is strongly recommended, if at all possible, to use your cellular phone when parked, or have a passenger use the phone. Conversations should be kept to a minimum.
- d) If your phone rings when you are driving -- especially during hazardous conditions -- let your cellular voice mail service take the call and listen to the message later when you are parked, or pull over before answering, if traffic condition permit.
- e) Suspend conversations during hazardous driving conditions or situations.
- f) Let the person to whom you are speaking know that you are driving and the call may be suspended at any time.
- g) Do not take notes or look up phone numbers while driving.
- h) Attempt to dial and place all calls when you are not moving.
- i) When possible, place your calls before you begin your trip, or call when your vehicle is stopped at a stop sign or red light. If you absolutely must dial a number while driving, assess the traffic and dial only a few numbers at a time.
- j) Learn and use the pre-programmed number dial features of your phone. Practice using this feature for commonly dialed numbers before driving so you are familiar with the procedures.
- k) Do not engage in stressful or emotional conversations while driving. A stressful or emotional phone conversation while driving is distracting and potentially dangerous. If necessary, suspend the phone conversation.
- l) Please do use your cellular phone to call for help or to help others in emergencies. Your cellular phone lets you be a "Good Samaritan" in the community. If you see an

emergency where lives are in danger call 9-1-1 and give the exact location and information to the 9-1-1 operator. Employees are not expected to offer additional assistance beyond calling for help. Please keep cell phones turned off or use the “keypad lock function” to avoid misdials. Any button on the keypad that is depressed for longer than 15 seconds will call 9-1-1.

The following guidelines are recommended for cellular telephone use while at a work site:

- a) The use of a cellular telephone at any work site may be a distraction to the user and/or may create an unsafe work environment. Such work sites include but are not limited to: road repair, maintenance and construction, operating or repairing energized equipment such as electrical panels, motors, or energized circuits. Such work sites must be secured or the cellular telephone used only by an employee while out of harm’s way of such work environments.
- b) The use of a cellular phone while operating a moving motorized off-road (maintenance/construction type) equipment shall be prohibited. Even hands-free cellular phone will not be authorized while operating this type of equipment, unless the equipment has been properly stopped and taken out of gear or turned off.

3.4 ACCEPTABLE USE

Employees and Elected Officials should observe the following guidelines in use of County-owned and personally owned telecommunications equipment in the course of conducting county business:

- a) Personal Use: While personal telephone calls are discouraged, it is recognized that periodic and infrequent calls of a “de minimis” nature during business hours may be acceptable. For example, there may be parents of children who must communicate with schools, doctor visits must be arranged, or similar circumstances of a personal nature arise which cannot be conducted after normal business hours. However, personal phone calls that are beyond de minimis, and are excessive in frequency, nature or length that interfere with the employee’s assigned responsibilities or the normal functioning of the work place are not acceptable.
- b) Long-distance calls on County-owned Equipment: Long-distance calls shall be for business purposes only. Any unauthorized long-distance calls determined to be other than for County business shall be reimbursed to the County promptly each month.
- c) Cellular Telephone Use: *For approved users of county-owned cellular telephones*, their use shall be managed cost effectively. While various cellular calling plans may provide usage thresholds that may include long distance calling at no additional cost, this does not mean that personal use or long distance calling policy should be used inappropriately. The purchase of additional equipment, features (internet type-use, text messaging, downloads, picture taking, etc.) or calling plans outside of an authorized County contract must be pre-authorized in the same manner as all other equipment acquisition.
- d) Protocol and Etiquette: Users should observe proper rules of accepted protocol and etiquette during business communications transmissions. Because wireless devices in particular may not be secure, care should be taken in transmitting sensitive information. Also all communication should be professional, non-violent and non-offensive in nature.

APPENDIX A

**Employee Declaration Forms
Employee Requisition for Equipment
Billing Dispute Form
Allowance Authorization Form(s)**

**DECLARATION OF EMPLOYEE'S UNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE USE
POLICIES FOR BULLOCH COUNTY ISSUED COMPUTER AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

I, _____, declare that I have read and that I am familiar with the Bulloch County Computer and Telecommunications Use Policy. I further understand that as an assignee of a computer or telecommunications device designated herewith that I am personally responsible for proper use and care for this equipment under my custody pursuant to this Policy.

I acknowledge, agree, and authorize that, unless I am granted authorized allowances, should I fail to timely reimburse the County for any personal or non-County business purpose purchases or charges other than de minimis use, the County may deduct the amounts necessary to recover the costs of said purchases or charges from my salary or wage. I understand such deductions shall continue from paycheck to paycheck until all amounts due are recovered by the County.

I further agree to relinquish use of this equipment immediately upon request or upon termination of employment or transfer.

I further agree to protect and safeguard the equipment. If the equipment is lost or stolen, I agree to notify the appropriate county personnel and/or the equipment company immediately.

I further agree to promptly reconcile my statement(s), and make any needed adjustments. I will ensure that transaction documents are obtained and attached to the proper county forms. Further, I understand that my use of the equipment will be audited, and I will assist reviewers and auditors in examining the equipment program.

I agree that I will relinquish my equipment to Bulloch County when requested to do so. I also understand that failure to use this Equipment in accordance with all rules and regulations may require relinquishing the equipment, reimbursement to the County, deduction from my salary or wage, and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, if I am an employee of Bulloch County.

Employee Assigned Equipment Responsibility:

Signed

Date

Description of Equipment (Make/Model/Asset ID)

Approved for Use:

County Manager (or Designee)

Date

**BULLOCH COUNTY REQUISITION FORM (MEMORANDUM):
FOR USE OF COMPUTER AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

DATE: _____

TO: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

FROM: (NAME): _____

(DEPARTMENT): _____

(EMPLOYEE NAME) _____

I AM REQUESTING THAT THE FOLLOWING EMPLOYEE BE GRANTED ELIGIBILITY FOR A BULLOCH COUNTY:

LAND LINE PHONE CELLULAR PHONE COMPUTER
 E-MAIL ADDRESS RADIO PAGER

THIS EQUIPMENT IS JUSTIFIED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

The intended user's job requires making and receiving phone calls while in transit which are critical to the immediate safety of life and/or property, or otherwise constitutes emergency services..

The user's job requires making and receiving phone calls while in transit, and delayed communication would cause a significant interruption in delivery of services or a major negative economic impact to the County.

Other telecommunications methods such as fixed telephones, pagers, two-way radio, voice mail, electronic mail, or facsimile machines cannot provide cost effective, satisfactory communications.

Other departmental portable or mobile cellular phones cannot be shared or pooled by the intended user, on an as-needed basis.

Other (explain)

Please explain what departmental internal controls will be used for issuance and monitoring of use:

Receipts and Transaction Logs
 Matching to Employee Time Sheets
 Monitoring Monthly Reports for Usage and Location of Purchase:
 Other (Explain)

**BULLOCH COUNTY
TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILLING DISPUTE FORM**

Name (as appears on invoice): _____

Account Number (as printed on invoice): _____

Billing Address: _____

City State Zip Code: _____

Business Phone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

DISPUTE ISSUE

Incorrect \$ Amount (attach sales receipt) _____
Duplicate Posting _____
Credit Not Processed (attach credit receipt) _____
Sales Tax Incorrectly Charged _____
Other, provide detail below. _____

Vendor	Product/Service	\$ Dollar Amount
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PROVIDE DETAILS ABOUT THE DISPUTED ITEM(S):

Signature of County Representative DATE

DATE DISPUTE RESOLVED _____

DETAILS:

Approved by Financial Administrator _____

Date _____

**BULLOCH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION
MONTHLY ALLOWANCE OR REIMBURSEMENT FOR
BUSINESS USE OF EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL CELLULAR TELEPHONE**

Employee Name: _____

Employee ID#: _____

Employee's Personal Cellular Telephone Number: _____

Monthly Plan Amount Based on Justification Rating:

___	Level I: Basic	\$28
___	Level II: Advanced	\$38
___	Level III: Advanced Plus	\$48
___	PDA	\$68

County Department: _____

Department Contact: _____ Phone No. : _____

Email: _____

As Department Manager/Director, I verify that the employee listed above is required, due to legitimate business need, to maintain a cellular telephone to conduct official COUNTY business. I hereby authorize the employee listed above to use his/her personal cellular telephone for conducting official COUNTY business. The Department will pay the employee a cellular telephone requirement allowance or reimbursement for using his/her personal cellular telephone in accordance with the County's policies.

Approval:

Department Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Title: _____

Date: _____

Division Director/Constitutional Official Signature: _____

Date: _____

*****Please attach a copy of the first page of you cellular telephone bill to this form, (to document that you have a cellular telephone and your monthly plan cost). Both the employee and the Department should retain a copy.**

**BULLOCH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION
FOR
BUSINESS USE OF EMPLOYEE'S PERSONAL CELLULAR TELEPHONE**

Employee Name: _____

Department: _____

Rating Criteria for Approval of a Cellular Telephone Allowance or Reimbursement: Apply the value of points from the appropriate cellular that best describes your responsibilities. Only one selection will apply for each criterion.

<i>Position and Grade</i>				<i>Points</i>
<i>Below Grade 14</i>	<i>Below Grade 14 (Public Safety)</i>	<i>Grade 14-19</i>	<i>Grade 20+</i>	
1.25	2.5	3.75	5.0	

<i>Number of Employees Supervised (FTE)</i>				<i>Points</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2-3</i>	<i>4-6</i>	<i>6+</i>	
1.25	2.5	3.75	5.0	

<i>Command and Control Responsibilities</i>				<i>Points</i>
<i>Custodial Responsibility for Resources or Facilities</i>	<i>Emergency Call Back After Hours (12 or more times per quarter)</i>	<i>Executive or Professional (Non-Emergency)</i>	<i>Emergency Call-Back or 365/24/7 hour on call</i>	
1.25	2.5	3.75	5.0	

<i>% of Work Time Spent Away From Duty Location or on the Road</i>				<i>Points</i>
<i>10% or Less</i>	<i>10%-20%</i>	<i>20%-30%</i>	<i>30%+</i>	
1.25	2.5	3.75	5.0	

<i>Management of Dispersed Operations</i>				<i>Points</i>
<i>< Than 1 Mile</i>	<i>1-5 Miles</i>	<i>5-10 miles</i>	<i>20 miles or ></i>	
1.25	2.5	3.75	5.0	

Total Points	
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Justification for a personal digital assistant (this allowance or reimbursement will generally be for public safety or emergency services and are allowed on a case-by-case basis; concrete examples should be given in the justification)

Monthly Plan Amount Based on Justification Rating:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------|
| ___ 5.0-13.50 points | Level I: Basic | \$28 |
| ___ 13.75-22.50 points | Level II: Advanced | \$38 |
| ___ 23.75 points + | Level III: Advanced Plus | \$48 |
| ___ PDA Justification | | \$68 |