



# Hays County Landline and Cell Phone Policy

Effective January 1, 2019

## PURPOSE

Landlines and Cell Phones are a large expense for the County. The purpose of the Landline and Cell Phone Policy is to reduce expenses and ensure that each device is being used to its best advantage and in the most cost-effective way. Elected officials and department heads are responsible for ensuring that each employee is trained on proper phone use.

## POLICY

1. All County-paid cell phones are on the AT&T system. There is no charge to the County for calls made between AT&T cell phones. Whenever possible, County employees with County- paid cell phones should communicate using those cell phones.
2. A call from a County cell phone to a County landline (desk phone) will result in a per-minute charge to the County. Calls from cell phones to landline phones should be avoided whenever possible.
3. The County's internal dial system (1+extension) established in 2010 is the least expensive way for calls to be made from one County landline phone to another. The internal dial system must be used at all times for communications between different offices if 2-way cell phone use is not an option. There is no longer a need or reason to call internally using the numbers published for the general public, which result in higher costs to the County.
  - Elected officials and department heads should ensure that their office/department's internal phone extension and cell phone information is kept up to date by reporting any changes to the Hays County Communications Manager.
  - No calls should be made to Directory Assistance (4-1-1) on County-paid cell or landline phones as these calls result in charges to the County. Employees needing Directory Assistance should first use the Internet to find a number, or dial 1-800-**FREE**-411 (1-800-373-3411) from your **phone**. Since the service is sponsored by advertisers, you'll have to listen to a 10-second ad before you can choose whether you want a business, government, or residential number.
  - County-paid Smart Phones have a Wi-Fi capability that allows for free calls and data access. Employees with Smart Phones should use this feature whenever possible. All County office buildings have Wi-Fi for employee use, and AT&T has tens of thousands of Wi-Fi-enabled "hot spots." Employees should seek and use those free Wi-Fi hot spots whenever possible when outside of County buildings.
4. For those employees whose department heads require them to have a cell phone to conduct County business, the County offers the option of allowing that employee to use his/her personal cell phone and receive a stipend of \$45 per month to cover County-use costs, as this can save

the County money over supplying a County-owned cell phone. This policy may be altered or ended at any time if the Auditor's Office determines that it is no longer in the County's best interest to offer it. An elected official or department head must fill out and sign the Request/Justification Form – Electronics and Related Equipment/Services located on the Intranet (County Documents/Employee Forms/Data Electronics Form) in order to request a cell phone or a stipend for an employee.

5. The Hays County Auditor's Office will review all phone charges for each office/department. The Commissioners Court will require explanations from elected officials and department heads for non-compliance.
6. All cell and landline charges will be the responsibility of each office/department.
7. All requests for new and existing cell phones except for certified peace officers, elected officials and department heads must be made via the Request/Justification Form – Electronics and Related Equipment/Services which is located on the county Intranet (County Documents/Employee Forms/Data Electronics Form).
8. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.