

Columbus Police Division Directive	EFFECTIVE	NUMBER
	Aug. 01, 1987	10.16
	REVISED	TOTAL PAGES
	Dec. 30, 2012	3
Telephone Usage and Release of Personal Information		



I. Introduction

A telephone call may be the only contact an individual will have with the Division of Police; therefore, it is important for Division personnel to project a professional image while engaged in a telephone conversation.

II. Definitions

A. Mobile Communication Device (MCD)

Any portable electronic device capable of transmitting or receiving data in the form of a text-message or capable of accessing the internet, including but not limited to a wireless/cellular telephone, a text-message device, or a personal digital assistant.

B. Text Message

A message sent, stored or received via a MCD, including email messages.

III. Policy Statements

- A. Personnel shall answer the telephone promptly, identify themselves by rank and name, offer assistance, and obtain information by speaking distinctly and in a helpful, professional manner. Communications Bureau and Records Unit personnel shall follow the telephone provisions set forth in their respective SOP Manuals.
- B. Personnel answering calls shall attempt to assist the caller and shall not transfer calls unnecessarily. When it is necessary to place a caller on hold, the caller shall be advised of the reason and shall not be left on hold for an extended period of time.
- C. Division telephones may be monitored and/or recorded, and text messages/ emails sent via a Division-issued MCD may be subject to Public Records law and Division review.
- D. Outgoing voicemail messages shall be professional and shall identify the Division component and/or the employee to which it is assigned. When appropriate, the message should include a number to call when immediate assistance is needed.
- E. Directory assistance calls should only be made when necessary.
- F. Long-distance calls shall be restricted to official police business. Personnel making a long-distance call on a Division telephone may be required to provide justification. All calls placed on Division-issued MCDs are billed as local calls, therefore use these devices when possible to make non-

confidential calls to locations outside the local calling area, but within the United States.

G. Personnel assigned a Division-issued MCD shall complete the Electronic Device Approval form and forward the form to the Personnel Unit.

H. Personnel with Division-issued MCDs shall have them turned on and operating while on duty, unless tactical or other operations dictate otherwise, and shall check the voice mail/messaging system regularly.

I. Unless otherwise prohibited, personnel may carry a personally-owned MCD while on duty.

J. Personnel carrying a MCD shall mute the incoming call indicator, set the device to vibrate, or power the device off when circumstances dictate.

K. Personnel should limit the use of Division telephones and Division-issued or personally-owned MCDs while on-duty or working special duty to official police business or to address personal situations of an urgent or emergency nature. The use of a telephone or MCD shall not interfere with the performance of the assigned duties or cause personnel to be inattentive to duty. Personnel may be required to provide justification for questionable or excessive use.

L. Personnel shall use Division-owned MCD's only for business purposes unless exigent or emergency circumstances exist which require personnel to use the Division-owned MCD for personal reasons.

M. Personnel **will not be reimbursed for any expenses incurred while** using a personally-owned MCD to conduct Division business.

N. Personnel shall not use unauthorized Bluetooth, other wireless technology, and/or wired accessories with any MCD while on duty. This does not apply to specific operations or assignments when use is approved by the chain of command.

O. Personnel should limit conversations on any MCD while driving a City-owned motor vehicle.

P. Personnel shall not read, send, or reply to email or text messages from any MCD while driving a City-owned motor vehicle unless exigent or emergency circumstances exist, or the use of the MCD is necessary in the course of the driver's duties while operating an emergency or public safety vehicle, as outlined in current law(s) and/or ordinance(s).

Q. Personnel shall not use the telephone function on the police radio to discuss confidential information or to relay telephone numbers that are restricted to "law enforcement use only" distribution.

R. Calls requesting employment verification shall be referred to the Personnel **Unit.**

- S. Home addresses and telephone numbers of Division personnel are confidential, and shall be released only to Division personnel for official business. Prosecutors and city attorneys requesting this information for preparation of court cases shall be referred to the Court Liaison Section or the Legal Advisor's Office.
- T. Computer-generated printouts containing Division personnel's home addresses and telephone numbers shall be kept in a secure place, shall not be duplicated, and shall be rendered unreadable upon expiration.

IV. Procedures

A. Releasing Personnel Information Over the Phone

- 1. Verify the caller's identity by asking for his or her telephone number, PNum, or other identifying information.
- 2. Utilize the Division's computerized personnel database, to obtain home telephone numbers and/or addresses for authorized callers.
- 3. Advise callers not authorized by Division policy that the employee's information will not be released.
- 4. Refer inquiries to which you cannot respond and requests from persons other than Division personnel to the Patrol Administrative **Unit**.
- 5. Transfer the call to the Patrol Administrative Sergeant for final disposition when the caller's status cannot be verified.

B. Incoming Telephone Calls for Personnel

- 1. Verify the requested employee's assignment through the Division's computerized personnel database system as necessary.
- 2. Connect the caller to the employee's assigned bureau.
- 3. Connect the caller to the Patrol Administrative **Unit** when the employee's assignment cannot be determined or the employee's bureau is closed.
- 4. Offer to take a message and forward it to the employee using either email or the Division message pad, form S-35.100, if the employee is unavailable.