



Town of North Providence  
Mayor Charles A. Lombardi

Department of Human Resources  
Director Anthony M. Pinto

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## **Cell Phone and Mobile Device Use Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Town Cell Phone Use Policy is to ensure that mobile device use does not interfere with or impede Town productivity, workplace safety, confidentiality, and the privacy rights of individuals. As used in this policy, the term “cell phone” is intended to apply to any electronic communication device, including any hardware or software—such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, or wearables—that sends, receives, or transmits voice, data, text, or images via cellular, wireless (Wi-Fi/Bluetooth), or wired networks.

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### **Scope**

This Policy applies to:

- Any individual employed by the Town;
- All personal and Town-owned mobile electronic communication devices; and
- All forms of mobile communication, including without limitation, calls, text messages, email, video recording, audio recording, photography/picture taking, and messaging applications.

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### **Permitted Use of Cell Phones**

This Policy does **not prohibit cell phone use**, but it does regulate when and how devices may be used.

Employees may use mobile electronic communication devices:

- During scheduled break periods or meal times;
- In emergency situations; or
- When explicitly authorized by a supervisor.

At all times, employees must ensure that cell phone usage does not disrupt the workflow or public service demands of any Town department.

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### **Strict Prohibition on Recording**

To protect individual privacy rights and comply with Rhode Island law:

- Audio recording, video recording or photography/picture taking of employees, customers, visitors, or Town operations is strictly prohibited without prior management authorization and, where applicable, individual consent.
- Secret, covert, or unauthorized recording of any kind is prohibited under all circumstances.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Unauthorized recording of conversations (in person or via phone);
- Taking photos or videos in the workplace; and
- Recording in meetings, workspaces, or restricted areas without prior consent from management.

Violations of this section may result in disciplinary action and may also expose the individual to personal legal liability under applicable law.

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### **Additional Prohibited Uses**

The following actions are also prohibited:

- Excessive personal use of mobile electronic communication devices during work hours;
  - Use of mobile devices while operating machinery, equipment, or Town vehicles;
  - Use of phones in restricted or sensitive areas, e.g. restrooms, locker rooms, or any facilities where employees have a reasonable expectation of privacy;
  - Accessing, storing, or sharing confidential Town information on unsecured and unauthorized platforms; and
  - Any use that disrupts work, meetings, or other employees, or has the purpose or effect to compromise an employee's, visitor's or other citizen's reasonable expectation of privacy.
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### **Town-Issued Devices**

If the Town provides a mobile electronic communication device, employees must:

- Use the device primarily for Town business purposes;
- Maintain the device in good working condition;
- Immediately report loss, theft, or damage to the employee's immediate supervisor;
- Return the device upon request of the Town or upon suspension or termination of employment;
- Upon suspension or termination of employment, return the device either unlocked or give the Town the device's passcode or other security code.

The Town reserves the right to monitor usage of Town-issued electronic communication devices in compliance with applicable laws.

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### **Data Security and Privacy of Town Issued Devices**

Employees must:

- Protect devices with passwords or biometric security;
- Avoid unsecured public Wi-Fi when handling Town information;
- Follow all Town cybersecurity and IT policies, whether now existing or hereinafter issued; and
- Refrain from installing unauthorized applications on Town devices.

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### **Disciplinary Action**

Violations of this Policy may result in:

- Implementation of the progressive disciplinary process, up to and including termination;
  - Suspension of mobile electronic communication device privileges (for Town-Issued devices)
  - Serious violations, particularly those involving unauthorized recording, may also result in adverse legal consequences under applicable Rhode Island law.
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**Exception to Policy**

Only if contradictory to this policy due to the unique nature of their job functions, duties, and safety, the Town Police, Fire, and Communications Departments are required to adhere to their respective department issued cell phone and mobile device policies and procedures.