

PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS
COLONEL RICHARD T. SULLIVAN
Chief of Police

September 1, 2001

GENERAL ORDER #21
Series of 2001

TO: ALL COMMANDING OFFICERS:

- I. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to insure the safety of officers by providing complete information through the most effective means available and providing for the efficient operation of the department In recognition that legislation is forthcoming which recognizes the dangers of cellular phone use while operating a motor vehicle, this department shall proactively seek to diminish the danger to its officers and to enhance public safety.
- II. Policy: This policy sets forth the department rules and regulations regarding the use of department issued cellular phones as well as the use of personal cellular phones while on duty as a member of this department.
- III. Procedure: for use of a DEPARTMENT ISSUED ("DI") CELLULAR PHONE:
 - A. General Use. Cellular phones are provided to certain officers in order to enhance the efficiency of the department. Officers who are assigned these phones should make every effort to utilize other means of communication where possible and appropriate.
 - B. Cellular phones shall only be used for department business except:
 1. When a personal emergency exists and use of a land-line is not possible or practical.
 2. When an officer is required to work beyond their normal shift and family notification is necessary.
 3. When it allows citizens involved in a police event, either as victims or witnesses, to contact family members, employers, child care providers, etc. to inform of their possible delay.
 4. When it is used to contact reporting parties, informants, and other citizens where such calls relate to department business.
 5. When it is utilized to return calls which result from unidentifiable pages.

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6. Officers shall utilize a department cellular phone log to indicate that the call is personal in nature, the officer shall reimburse the department as set forth in this policy. In-coming phone calls shall be documented when accepted on cellular phones in great frequency.

C. Miscellaneous issues relating to cellular phone use.

1. City Facilities. Officers should refrain from using a "DI" cellular phone when they are in any City-owned facility where there is access to a city (hard-line) phone.
2. Car to car communications. Officers should refrain from using cellular phones in order to relay information about a police incident where such information would provide for the safety of all officers responding to said incident. The information should be communicated to all officers either through the dispatcher or through lap-top electronic messaging.
3. Operating a police vehicle. Except in an emergency where other official means of communication have been severed, officers shall not operate a police vehicle while using a cellular phone. Unless faced with such an emergency, all calls shall be made from a stationary position.
4. Public Use of Cellular Phone. Officers shall not utilize a cellular phone while standing in public. Unless faced with an emergency, officers shall be discreet in their use of a personal cellular phone.
5. Personal calls, phones assigned to a single officer. Each month, officers assigned "DI" cellular phones shall be provided with a copy of their phone's billing statement by the Director of Communications for the City of Providence. Officers shall highlight those calls which were personal in nature. Calls made to an officers home shall be reviewed on a case by case basis and may be authorized when not excessive. Officers shall submit the highlighted billing statement along with reimbursement to the Director of Administration for those calls which were of an unauthorized personal nature. Reimbursement shall be made by personal check payable to the "Commissioner of Public Safety-Providence."
6. Personal calls, phones shared by a number of officers. Where a cellular phone is shared by a group of officers, each personal call must be logged on a department "Cellular Phone Log" form which will remain with the phone until it is full or the end of a billing cycle. At the end of each billing cycle, phone logs shall be forwarded to the Director of Administration of the police department. A comparison will be made between the billing statement and the cellular phone log indicating a reimbursement fee for any officer who made a personal call. This fee shall be forwarded to the officer who shall be required to make reimbursement to the department in accordance with #6 above.
7. Review. Each month, highlighted billing statements along with reimbursements shall be reviewed by the Director of Communications for the City of Providence or his/her designee in order to insure that reimbursement has been made for all personal calls.
8. Reimbursement fees will be set at a rate determined by the rate at which the City is billed for cellular service.

IV. Procedure for use of privately owned cellular phones while on duty.

- A. OPERATING A POLICE VEHICLE. Except in an emergency where other means of communication have been severed officers shall not operate a police vehicle while using a cellular phone. Unless faced with such an emergency, all calls shall be made from a stationary position.
- B. Public Use of Cellular Phone. Officers shall not utilize a cellular phone while standing in public. Unless faced with an emergency officers shall be discreet in their use of a personal cellular phone.
- C. Use of Cellular Phones while on a Paid Detail. Officers shall not use cellular phones while working paid details unless some emergency exists or it becomes necessary for an officer to briefly call home.
- D. Usage. Officers shall limit their use of personal cellular phones such that their duties to the department are not compromised.
- E. Police Communication. Except in an emergency, or where necessary as a matter of a strategic plan to overcome the possibility that communications will be overheard, ie. Scanner and where other official department communication methods are unavailable, officers shall not utilize a personal cellular phone to bypass official means of communication. Officers should refrain from using cellular phones in order to relay information about a police incident where such information might compromise the safety of all officers responding to said incident. The information should be communicated to all officers through the dispatcher or through lap-top electronic messaging.
- F. Car to car communications and Supervisory Assistance shall be done via the police radio in order to enhance officer safety and to establish and maintain a taped record.

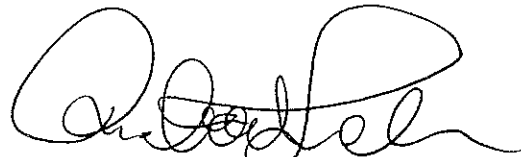
V. Responsibility/Compliance: It shall be the responsibility of each supervisor to ensure compliance with this order.

VI. Dissemination/Receipt: This order shall be disseminated to all members of this department who shall sign for its receipt.

APPROVED:



JOHN J. PARTINGTON
Commissioner
Deputy of Public Safety



RICHARD T. SULLIVAN
Colonel
Chief of Police