



South Yorkshire  
Fire & Rescue

WORKING FOR A SAFER  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

## **Mobile Phone Policy**

Updated 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2009

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **PROVISION AND USE OF MOBILE PHONES**

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue will provide mobile phones to posts where there is a clearly identified business need.

All mobile phones and associated equipment will, at all times, remain the property of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and must be returned, on request, to the ICT Section.

Mobile phones and associated equipment will be used safely at all times, in accordance with any legislative, regulatory or internal requirement. Users will be required to acknowledge acceptance of published guidance.

Users are responsible for the equipment and for their own actions, including failure to take appropriate action, at all times whilst using or carrying mobile phones.

The procedure entitled "Procedure for the Provision and Use of Mobile Phones" shows the criteria for the issue, recovery and usage of mobile phones, including paying for private calls.

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE**

### **PROCEDURE FOR THE PROVISION AND USE OF MOBILE PHONES**

SYFR provides mobile phones to personnel with a clearly defined need for continuous contact. Personnel identified as lone workers, particularly those working outside of normal office hours, may also meet the criteria for a mobile phone, although this should not be regarded as an adequate means of safety. Mobile phones are allocated to posts as opposed to people. Therefore, when someone leaves a post they must inform the ICT Section so that records can be updated or return the allocated phone for re-issue if appropriate.

SYFR provides mobile phones through a Government Corporate contract with Vodafone. The annual revenue budget includes a sum to pay the contract costs and call costs incurred. The handsets provided will be from the approved range only. The current contract allows for free phone calls between 2 Vodafone handsets (this does not include text messages).

Subject to the submission of an appropriately completed FS 1300A request form, endorsed by a senior officer, ICT Section will issue mobile phones to personnel meeting the general criteria laid down in Appendix A.

## Appendix A

### **CRITERIA FOR ISSUING MOBILE PHONES TO SYFR PERSONNEL**

The criteria for the issue of mobile phones relate to the job role and the relative need to either be contactable at all times whilst on duty or the ability to be able to make contact. The latter is particularly relevant to lone workers.

The fact that someone occasionally works alone does not make them a lone worker. Lone workers should be defined under the terms of a risk assessment conducted by the individuals Line Manager. A risk assessment would take into consideration the time of day, hours worked, location, travelling and general vulnerability. The provision of a mobile phone should not be regarded as an adequate means of safety.

Mobile phone holders are categorised on a scale of one to four, four being deemed the most important. This list is not exhaustive and may be changed/updated as appropriate.

| <b><u>User group</u></b>                  | <b><u>Category</u></b> |
|---|------------------------|
| Principal Officers                        | 4                      |
| Area Managers                             | 4                      |
| Group & Station Managers                  | 4                      |
| Other flexi duty officers                 | 4                      |
| Mobile Mechanics                          | 4                      |
| Appliances                                | 4                      |
| Fire Control, including standby equipment | 4                      |
| On Call Rota Staff                        | 3                      |
| Section Heads                             | 3                      |
| Admin and general:                        |                        |
| ▪ Occupational Health                     | 2                      |
| ▪ Fire Safety Inspectors                  | 2                      |
| ▪ Community Safety Outreach Workers       | 2                      |
| ▪ Community Advocates/Education           | 2                      |
| ▪ Publicity/Public Relations              | 2                      |
| ▪ Executive Support                       | 2                      |
| ▪ Arson Intervention                      | 2                      |
| ▪ Training Staff                          | 2                      |
| ▪ General Duties Staff                    | 2                      |
| All other staff                           | 1                      |

### **Application of Categories**

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Cat 4 | Automatically issued to the post holder.                             |
| Cat 3 | Issued on demand for the use of those undertaking the role.          |
| Cat 2 | Issued on request providing Line Manager approves the business case. |
| Cat 1 | Not provided for this role.  |

**Note:** All requests for the issue of mobile phones must be submitted to the ICT Section.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR USE OF MOBILE PHONES**

Mobile phones are provided for use by an approved post holder whilst carrying out their normal duties.

Personnel allocated a mobile phone must sign to acknowledge safe receipt and to accept the terms and conditions of use. SYFR will not issue any mobile phone without securing a signed agreement form from the user.

A mobile phone holder leaving a post to which a phone is allocated should return the phone to the ICT Section where receipt will be acknowledged. Anyone moving to a post that already carries a mobile phone allocation should inform ICT immediately, where a change to the mobile phone database will be made. Under these circumstances, they may retain the originally allocated mobile phone.

Anyone moving to a post which does not have a mobile phone allocated should return their original phone to the ICT Section.

Mobile phone holders who damage or lose their phone should submit a report of the circumstances (including date, time, location, activity, etc.) to the ICT Manager. If the loss or damage occurred whilst carrying out normal duties, the Service will not normally impose a charge upon the holder.

Mobile phone holders may make or send brief personal calls and text messages but the cost of these should be reimbursed to SYFR. Failure to do this may result in action being taken by the Inland Revenue against both the individual and the Service. Calls made and texts sent whilst abroad are treated in the same way as any other calls or texts.

The procedure for recovering the cost of personal calls and texts is as follows:

- ICT will send details of all mobile phone charges incurred on a quarterly basis.
- Holders should identify any personal calls and texts
- The holder should send the amount due to the Registry Section at Eyre Street.
- In cases where a holder has made no personal calls and texts, they should send a "nil return".

SYFR provides mobile phones for business purposes. If a mobile phone holder is off work with sickness for a period of time in excess of 14 days, and a temporary replacement is put into the post, the mobile phone holder should return the phone to the ICT Section. The phone would then be allocated to the temporary post holder and associated records amended accordingly.

### **USE OF MOBILE PHONES WHILST DRIVING**

Anything that distracts a driver increases the risk of an accident – posing a threat to pedestrians, cyclists, passengers and other road users. You must be in proper control of your vehicle while you are driving. Any lack of concentration or momentary inattention may result in your being prosecuted. Even using a hands free phone may distract you.

Government legislation makes it an offence to hold a mobile phone whilst driving a motor vehicle. Fire Service personnel are bound by the same regulations and, as such, would be liable for prosecution if discovered and stopped.

The use of a hands-free kit is still acceptable and it will be the policy of SYFR to issue, where appropriate, a Bluetooth hands free car kit that allows you to use your mobile phone safely and legally whilst driving.

Bluetooth is a radio-based technology that allows devices to share information over a maximum range of 100 metres. Unlike other wireless technologies, such as infrared, the devices don't need to be 'looking' at each other. As long as two Bluetooth devices are close enough to each other, it should be possible to make a connection.

This means you can use a Bluetooth headset with a Bluetooth-enabled mobile phone even if it is stored in your pocket or briefcase.

However, if you do not have a hands free kit issued to you, please do not use your phone whilst driving your vehicle.

Fines as a result of a traffic offence relating to mobile phone usage, are the responsibility of the employee. This applies to business and private use.

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue is committed to reducing the risks which our staff face and create when driving for work purposes. We ask all our staff to play their part, whether they use a Service vehicle, their own or a hire/lease vehicle.

Staff driving for work purposes must never make or receive calls on a hand-held mobile phone.

#### **Senior Managers must:**

- Lead by example, both in the way they drive themselves and by not tolerating poor driving practice among colleagues.
- They must never make or receive a call on a hand-held mobile phone while driving.

#### **Line Managers must ensure:**

- They also lead by personal example
- They do not expect staff to answer calls when they are driving
- They have communicated responsibilities not to use a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving to their staff

- They encourage staff to switch phones to voicemail (where possible)
- Staff plan journeys to include rest stops which also provide opportunities to check messages and return calls
- Work practices do not pressurise staff to use a mobile phone while driving
- Compliance with the mobile phone policy is periodically checked
- They challenge unsafe attitudes and behaviours, encourage staff to drive safely, and lead by personal example by never themselves using a hand-held mobile phone when driving

**Staff who drive for work must:**

- Never use a hand-held phone while driving
- Plan journeys so they include rest stops when messages can be checked and calls returned
- Ensure their phone is switched off and can take messages (where appropriate)
- Co-operate with monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

Station/section: Generic  
 Task: Use of Bluetooth Mobile Phone headsets

| No. | Hazard   | Current Risk<br>[No controls in place] |                     |                | Risk Control Measures  | Residual Risk<br>[Control measures implemented] |                     |                |
|-----|--|--|---------------------|----------------|--|---|---------------------|----------------|
|     |  | Impact<br>(1-4)                        | Likelihood<br>(1-4) | Risk<br>Rating |  | Impact<br>(1-4)                                 | Likelihood<br>(1-4) | Risk<br>Rating |
| 1   | Using Bluetooth mobile phone and headset during driving. | 4                                      | 3                   | 12             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is preferable for drivers making or receiving calls on their mobile telephony equipment to find a safe place to stop and answer the call when the car is stationary. To make calls while driving the telephone must be set up to use voice recognition dialling.</li> <li>If the headset and mobile phone are intended to be used they must be set up to accept incoming calls automatically without use of the hand.</li> <li>Users of Bluetooth headsets and mobile phones should receive information, guidance and instruction on how to correctly set up the equipment for use.</li> <li>The user should operate the equipment with caution until satisfied and confident with its operation in the vehicle.</li> <li>Users should ensure that their headset and mobile phone is correctly charged with power in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.</li> <li>If the use of a mobile phone and headset prevents the driver from exercising "full control of the vehicle at all times" the driver may be prosecuted. All potential prosecutions involving using mobile telephony equipment should be brought to the attention of the Brigade.</li> <li>The allocation of mobile telephony equipment must be made solely on the business needs of the Brigade and authorised by an appropriate manager.</li> </ul> | 4   | 1                   | 4              |

|  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
|  | Health effects of using hands free mobile phones and headsets. | 1 | 1 | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no conclusive evidence that use of mobile telephony equipment has any health affects.</li> <li>• The use of mobile telephony equipment should be only for periods where its use is absolutely necessary.</li> <li>• International guidelines seek to ensure that exposure to radio waves is kept below the recommended level. All mobile phones sold in the UK and issued by the Brigade meet these guidelines.</li> </ul> | 1 | 1 | 1 |
|  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |
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|  |  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |
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Assessed by: Simon Walsh

Qualification: NEBOSH Gen Cert

Date: 19 January 2006