


NORTHAMPTON POLICE DEPARTMENT Administration & Operations Manual		
Policy: Cell Phones and other Electronic Devices		AOM: S-104
Massachusetts Police Accreditation Standards Referenced:		Issuing Authority <hr/> Jody Kasper Chief of Police
Dissemination Date: 4/23/2003 Effective Date: 4/23/2003	Amended: 10/23 Reviewed: 5/05, 9/08, 1/09, 2/10, 5/12, 2/13, 9/14, 9/16, 9/18, 10/23	

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I. Introductory Discussion

The Northampton Police Department recognizes the value of police officers carrying a cellular phone while on duty. While the availability of a cell phone offers great convenience to the officer, its use may affect departmental communication protocol and officer safety.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to establish guidelines for the safe use of and uniform appearance of cellular phones and other communication devices while on duty. There is no intent to discourage officers from using these devices for appropriate department business. Department employees who are issued cell phones

shall comply with all the same rules and regulation as the personally owned cell phones.

III. Policy

- A. For the purpose of this policy, “on duty” shall also include outside details or other such department authorized assignment.
- B. No employee shall utilize a cellular phone or the equivalent thereof to disseminate any information concerning the Department to any third party without the expressed authorization of the officer-in-charge. For the purpose of this section, information shall include voice, text, images, or video data. This includes personal and department issued cell phones. This shall not preclude the conveyance of official and necessary information to police officers, dispatch personnel, or others who are involved in an investigation or incident. This type of information may also be sent to NPD personnel who oversee or manage the department’s website or social networking accounts such as Facebook and twitter.
- C. No employee shall utilize a cellular phone, any other electronic device, or the in-cruiser laptop to stream and/or watch videos or to play games during the course of their work hours. This restriction includes video games, news feeds, music videos, pornographic videos, television shows, YouTube videos, or any other videos. The only exception is if the content is work-related.

IV. Permission

- A. Department members may possess cellular phones or other such communication devices while on duty providing they abide by the conditions as set forth in this policy.
- B. Failure to adhere to the conditions of this policy may result in discipline.
 - 1. The telephone number of the cellular phone must be on file with the Department. It is the responsibility of the member to advise their Captain of Administration of the phone number.
 - 2. The officer shall have the option to utilize this phone number as an alternate off-duty contact number.

V. Operation

Officers are reminded that they are to be alert and vigilant at all times in the performance of their duties and devote their full-time attention to the service of the Department and the community.

1. Uniformed Officers will have their cellular phones left on silent or vibrate mode at all times for officer safety. If not equipped with that function, they shall be turned off when answering service calls or during investigations.
2. Whenever possible, the use of a cellular phone shall be done out of public view.
3. Personal phone calls or text messages made or received on cellular phones are strongly discouraged and shall be limited to urgent situations or emergencies.
4. Officers may use their personal cellular phone for department business when no other means of communication are available or practical.

VI. Safety Precautions

- A. Cellular phones shall be turned off while in an explosive atmosphere, i.e. hazardous spills or at the gasoline pumps.
- B. Cellular phones must not be used within six feet of the automated external defibrillator (AED).
- C. While on duty, the use of cellular phones while driving is prohibited except in cases of emergency. If a call must be made or answered, the officer shall bring the cruiser to a full stop off the traveled portion of the roadway.
- D. It is essential that when a conflict exists between safety and the utilization of a cell phone, safety must receive top priority.

VII. Liability

The Department and the City of Northampton accepts no liability for monetary charges resulting from such use and is not responsible for loss or damage unless such loss or damage is directly attributable to use for departmental purposes.