

Human Resources Policy

Medical officers – Terms and conditions

Policy Number: C23 (QH-POL-235)

Publication date: May 2021

Purpose: To outline the stand-by arrangements when on call for medical officers and telecommunications package for senior medical officers.

Application: This policy applies to medical officers working for Queensland Health.

Delegation: The 'delegate' is as listed in the Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, or the Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

Related policy or documents:

- Medical Officers (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015
- Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No 5) 2018
- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- Corporate Policy Statement 9.3 – Telephone, facilities, services and equipment

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1 Policy Statement

This policy outlines the stand-by arrangements for medical officers, and the entitlements and conditions of a telecommunications package for senior medical officers.

2 Stand-by arrangements

The following stand-by arrangements apply for medical officers when on call.

2.1 Stand-by allowance

A stand-by allowance is payable where:

- agreement is reached between a medical officer and Hospital and Health Service (HHS) (when a medical officer holds themselves available for duty) and
- the time for the return to duty is within 10 minutes or other time that requires the medical officer to reside away from their normal place of residence.

Where the time agreed for the medical officer to return to work is 10 minutes or less, the payment of a standby allowance is to be made even if the medical officer is able to return to their normal place of residence.

The amount of the standby allowance is:

- For an eligible Senior Medical Officer (SMO)
 - 10 per cent of the MO1-7 (Staff Specialist) weekly rate for each 24-hour period (or part thereof) on call (Monday to Saturday inclusive)
 - 15 per cent of the MO1-7 (Staff Specialist) weekly rate for each Sunday (or part thereof) on call.
- For a Resident Medical Officer (RMO)
 - 10 per cent of the Reg6 weekly rate for each 24-hour period (or part thereof) on call (Monday to Saturday inclusive)
 - 15 per cent of the Reg6 weekly rate for each Sunday (or part thereof) on call.

Each day does not count as a 'stand-alone' period.

On call allowance is not payable for any day when a medical officer receives a standby allowance.

No standby payment is to be made if the agreement is for the medical officer to return to duty within 30 minutes and they can return to their normal place of residence. On call allowance is paid in those situations.

2.2 Recall and overtime payment

In addition to the payments in section 2.1, appropriate recall and overtime payments are to be made in accordance with the Medical Officers (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015 and Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No 5) 2018.

2.3 Fatigue leave

Fatigue leave is to be granted in accordance with the Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 5) 2018.

2.4 Residing away from normal place of residence

Where the time agreed for the medical officer on call to return to duty requires the medical officer to reside away from their normal place of residence, the following is to be provided free of charge:

- suitable accommodation including furnishings, fixtures, fittings, television and telephone
- meals at the usual meal times.

The cleaning and maintenance of the accommodation is the responsibility of Queensland Health.

3 Telecommunications package

The following entitlements and conditions apply to SMOs when purchasing telecommunications equipment. This package does not apply to locum medical officers.

3.1 Telecommunications package and related entitlements

The telecommunications package is a one-off payment of up to \$1,200 to eligible SMOs as reimbursement for approved purchases of telecommunications equipment.

The purchase of telecommunications equipment is approved on an as needs basis. The telecommunications package (to the extent appropriate based on need) is in addition to, and not instead of, the installation of a telephone and/or reimbursement of telephone call charges.

3.2 Entitlement for full-time employees

Eligible SMOs are entitled to an initial allowance (telecommunications package) for the reimbursement of approved purchases and installation costs of telecommunications equipment. A limit of \$1,200 per SMO applies for full-time employees. The telecommunications allowance is a one-off payment.

3.3 Entitlement for part-time employees

Part-time SMOs are to be engaged by Queensland Health for at least 50 per cent of the full-time equivalent to qualify for the telecommunications package.

Part-time eligible SMOs are entitled to the telecommunications package at the discretion of the delegate on a pro rata basis. For example, a part-time SMO working half of the full-time equivalent hours is to be paid a telecommunications package of \$600.

Part-time eligible SMOs are to apply for the telecommunications package on the same basis as full-time employees. When determining whether the telecommunications package is to be provided to a part-time SMO, the following issues are to be considered by the delegate:

- number of service hours provided per week
- level of on call and out of hours responsibilities
- nature of service provided
- geographic area covered by the service.

3.4 Conditions for the telecommunications package

The medical superintendent (or the Health Service Chief Executive) is to determine the combination of items which attract financial assistance on a case-by-case basis. The determination is to be based on:

- clinical grounds including the style and type of medical practice undertaken
- cost effectiveness of the combination of items
- the level of financial assistance needed.

3.5 Personal contribution to purchase equipment over \$1,200

If an eligible SMO intends to purchase equipment costing more than \$1,200, they may add a personal contribution to the \$1,200 provided by the HHS. The equipment and any enhancement remain the property of the HHS. When the equipment is due for replacement, the eligible SMO may elect to have the same enhancement supplied at no cost.

Definitions:

Eligible senior medical officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical superintendents with private practice (MSPP) • Senior medical officers (SMOs) of Hospital and Health Services who are covered by the Medical Officers (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015 • Part-time medical officers in the above categories (at the discretion of the Health Service Chief Executive (HSCE)) • For the purposes of this policy, reference to SMOs includes all of the above categories.
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History:

May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – formatted as part of the HR Policy review – amended to update references and naming conventions – updated to expand the applicability of the standby provisions to Resident Medical Officers, using the same principles of applicability as for Senior Medical Officers. – updated to allow for the provision of mobile phones.
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy application amended as a result of changes to the Hospital and Health Boards (Changes to Prescribed Services) Amendment Regulation 2019.
October 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to incorporate provisions of Telecommunications Package – Senior Medical Officers HR Policy C53 • Policy re-titled from 'Stand-by arrangements for senior medical officers' to 'Senior Medical Officers – Terms and conditions' to better reflect policy content
April 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy Simplification project • Policy amended to update references and naming conventions. • Policy reviewed as part of the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) HR Policy Integration project. • Policy not applicable to QAS employees.

August 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed as a result of the HR Policy Consolidation Project.
Previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IRM 2.5-28 Stand-By Arrangements for Senior Medical Officers On Call

MOCAS5 Protected

Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work
Code of Practice 2022
applies 1 April 2023

Attachment One – Telecommunication package process

The following information is provided as the minimum mandatory standard practice, procedure or process to enable satisfactory compliance with this Queensland Health HR policy.

Local guidelines/procedures may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. Any local guidelines/procedures must be consistent with this policy and standard practice and ensure employee entitlements continue to be met.

1 Purchasing telecommunications equipment

It is the responsibility of the Director Medical Services (DMS)/SMO's line manager to manage the purchasing of equipment for eligible SMOs in order to gain maximum benefit for Queensland Health and the employee. Eligible SMOs are to have input into the process to ensure quality and value for money issues are fully explored.

Prior to purchasing telecommunications equipment, eligible Queensland Health SMOs are to discuss the purchase of telecommunications equipment or services (including installation costs) to support their work, with the DMS. The DMS is to ensure they have the correct financial delegation to purchase the equipment/services or refer to the appropriate financial delegate.

DMS/SMO's line manager are to ensure:

- the telecommunications package is tailored to each individual's requirements
- the proposed purchase is compatible with existing equipment, and meets business needs
- the equipment may be used by other employees if needed
- eligible SMOs receive their entitlements in an effective and efficient manner.

2 Telecommunications equipment included

The eligible SMO may choose items of telecommunication equipment relevant to their work practice as agreed. Items may be chosen from an existing equipment pool or purchased as needed. Items include and are not limited to:

- telephones (landline and/or mobile phones)
- facsimile machines
- pagers
- answering machines
- modems.

3 Equipment ownership and replacement responsibilities

The communications equipment provided to eligible SMOs remains at all times the property of Queensland Health.

The HHS is responsible for replacing communication equipment provided to eligible SMOs at the end of the equipment's generally accepted useful life. If an eligible SMO has contributed to the purchase of specific equipment, it is to be replaced at the end of its normal working life with comparable equipment at no extra expense to the employee.

If the equipment requires replacement due to loss or damage, the HHS is responsible for the replacement/repair providing due care has been taken by the eligible SMO. Equipment may be replaced from items in the equipment pool.

4 Resignation of eligible SMO

On resignation of the eligible SMO, the telecommunication equipment is to be returned to the hospital/facility and placed in the equipment pool. The delegate is to ensure this occurs.

If an eligible SMO resigns, an account is to be sought from the telecommunications carrier to ensure payment is made by the HHS for all business related calls and associated costs. The eligible SMO is to pay for non-business related calls.

5 Equipment pool

Items returned to the equipment pool are to be re-issued to new eligible SMOs on request and are to be valued at current market prices.

Items in the equipment pool may also be issued to existing eligible SMOs as a replacement for an existing item of equipment at the end of its generally accepted useful life, or in the event of loss or damage of existing equipment.

6 Care of equipment

Each eligible SMO is responsible for appropriate care of the communication equipment provided.

7 Use of equipment during leave

Eligible SMOs are entitled to retain the equipment for personal use during periods of paid leave. Paid leave includes recreation, sick, long service, conference and study. While on leave an eligible SMO is responsible for the cost of all communications.

Specific approval of the DMS/SMO's line manager is required for the SMO to retain the equipment on any absence of paid leave in excess of ten consecutive calendar weeks. The following is to be considered:

- the purpose of the absence (e.g. study program)
- amount of leave taken during the year
- availability of telecommunications equipment for use by locums.

If an eligible SMO takes unpaid maternity/paternity leave or other extended leave without pay, the entitlement is to be withdrawn temporarily for the period of leave.

The equipment is to be retained up to a maximum period of ten consecutive calendar weeks for absences due to workers' compensation. The eligible SMO is responsible for the cost of all communications during absences for workers' compensation.

8 Locum medical officers

Locum medical officers are not provided with the telecommunications package. When a locum medical officer is engaged, equipment from the equipment pool may be used by the locum when it is considered essential from a service delivery perspective.

9 Accounting system

Managers are to ensure that an appropriate accounting system is in place for differentiating personal and business related communications. The system is to ensure that eligible SMOs are reimbursed for the cost of purchasing equipment according to current business practice.

HHSs are to implement the following arrangements:

- accounts are to be issued by the telecommunications carrier in the medical practitioner's name, care of the facility's address and forwarded directly to the SMO
- medical practitioner to pay the account and seek reimbursement from the facility for service/rental charges, business communications and minor business related personal communications (e.g. telephone calls to home to advise a partner of changes to the day's schedule)
- reimbursement from the facility to the medical practitioner is to occur in a timely manner
- SMOs are to pursue the paid accounts with the facility for reimbursement within 60 days of issue date of account.

Only mobile accounts that have been implemented by HHSs through this process are to be presented to HHS finance units for reimbursement.

10 Review

Periodic reviews of telecommunications allowance arrangements are to be undertaken by HHSs to ensure appropriate use is made of the allowance.

11 Costs

All employees are to responsibly manage costs. This includes using the most cost efficient method for making calls, e.g. mobile versus landline.

12 Special arrangements offered by telecommunications carriers

Information on arrangements offered to Queensland Health employees by the telecommunications carriers is available from the online Self Service Centre.