Installation in Residences of Telecommunications Equipment - Medical
Human Resources Policy

Effective Date: May 2010

1 PURPOSE

To outline the installation in residences of telecommunications equipment (including telephones) provisions for medical employees.

2 APPLICATION

This policy applies to Queensland Health medical employees.

3 GUIDELINES

Guidelines may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. The guidelines must be consistent with this policy.

4 DELEGATION

The ‘delegate’ is as listed in the Queensland Health Human Resource Delegations Manual as amended from time to time.

5 REFERENCES

- Medical Officers’ (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.2) 2009
- Medical Superintendents with Right of Private Practice and Medical Officers with Right of Private Practice – Queensland Public Hospitals Award – State 2003
- Queensland Health Code of Conduct

6 SUPERSEDES

- IRM 2.2-3 Installation in Residences of Telecommunications Equipment, Including Telephones

7 POLICY

The arrangements in this policy apply in all cases in which a health service district requires the installation of a telephone in a medical employee’s private residence for official purposes.

Telephone services are provided by Queensland Health in residences to facilitate the business of the employer by enabling key employees in health service districts to be quickly and easily contacted. The residence may be owned, leased, or rented by the employer or employee.

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Refer to Corporate Policy Statement APP 9.3 - Telephone Facilities, Services and Equipment.

7.1 Costs of private telephone calls

The cost of private calls (including local, national, international, and mobile calls) is the responsibility of the employee (refer section 8.1.2 for reimbursements applicable in certain circumstances).

8 APPLYING THE POLICY

8.1 Installation of telecommunications equipment in residences

8.1.1 Connection

The following applies for the connection of a telephone:

- The employee is to arrange connection directly with the telecommunications carrier and submit the paid account for reimbursement by the district.
- The district is to meet the cost of the installation and the rental charges.
- The new connection is to be billed in the name of the employee at the address where the service is to be established.
- Districts may facilitate arrangements with the carrier to minimise delays in installation of the service.

8.1.2 Reimbursement

The district is to reimburse the cost of official national and international calls, and official calls to mobile phones. All other charges are at the employee's cost.

An allowance not exceeding the cost of 280 metered local calls per annum is allowed for medical superintendents. For all other employees (with prior approval) the allowance is not to exceed the cost of 166 metered local calls per annum.

Reimbursement of installation and rental charges for employees’ private telephone services is not to exceed the standard rates for a telephone line and single handset equipment. If the employee has a package arrangement with a telecommunications carrier, reimbursement is made only for the costs directly attributable to the provision of a telephone line and associated handset and equipment (and not the entire package). It may be necessary for the employee to supply details of the particular carrier’s standard telephone line and handset installation and rental charges when submitting claims.

Claims for reimbursement of telecommunications charges are only to be considered for payment if the claim is submitted within 12 months from the billing date.

The number of metered local calls appears on the billing statement issued by the telecommunications carrier.

Districts are to accept responsibility only for call charges in the above outlined circumstances and only when the above procedures are followed.
8.1.3 Telephone usage

All official national calls made from the telephone in the residence are to be dialled direct to ensure that the minimum cost is incurred. The calls are to be recorded in a register and reconciled with the billing statement received from the telecommunications carrier.

8.1.4 Hospital switchboard and health facility extensions

When an employee is provided with a telephone service as an extension from the hospital or health facility switchboard or other approved telecommunications feature or product, the district is to make appropriate arrangements to ensure that a register is kept of all official national calls.

Employees are to make their own arrangements for outgoing private calls. Options may include pre-paid telephone cards or reverse charge calling.

8.1.5 Short term employees

A district may arrange the connection of the telephone service for local access only (and meet the cost of installation, rental charges, and official local calls) when:

- it is impractical for employees to connect the service in their own name, e.g. short term temporary employment, short-term relieving, etc.
- the initial engagement is for less than three months.

Employees are to make their own arrangements if national call access is required for private calls. These options may include pre-paid telephone cards or reverse charge calling.

8.1.6 Mobile phones

A mobile phone may be substituted for a fixed installation. The use of mobile phones is strictly restricted to official calls (including text messaging) only.

8.1.7 Connection of personal computers and facsimiles to external telephone exchange lines

Telephone lines and services, including mobile phones, for which the health service district is the rental account payer, are not to be used for connecting privately owned personal computers/modems to the internet, or operating privately owned facsimile machines.

8.1.8 Taxation issues

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) requires substantiation of monies paid to employees for reimbursement of costs for telephones. It is the responsibility of the employee to justify the proportion claimed for business calls.
8.1.9 Accounting system

Health service districts are to ensure that an appropriate accounting system is in place for reimbursement to employees for any costs associated with official telephones installed in residences.

8.1.10 Review

Periodic reviews of staffing, residential, and telecommunication arrangements are to be undertaken by health service districts. Any arrangements and associated payments not justified on the basis of official need are to be discontinued.

9 HISTORY

| May 2010 | Developed as a result of the HR policy consolidation project. |