

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is beyond controversy that cell phones and cell phone communication have become an integral part of our personal and work lives. It is a rare Family Resources employee who does not have a cell phone and many are required to have one for their work. More than a convenience, they have become an almost essential tool in our ability to quickly respond to the kinds of crises that develop in our work. Like anything else, however, there are problems as well as utilities. Some of these problems are matters of courtesy and common sense, but some of them are also serious safety concerns. The procedures which follow address and govern the use of all cell phones in connection with agency operations. They apply to all agency personnel while engaged in agency business.

## **CELL PHONES AND DRIVING**

There is no question that the use of a cell phone while driving increases the risk of accident. This seems to be true whether or not the device is 'hands free'. Therefore the use of a cell phone while driving a vehicle on agency business has to be a matter of concern. In recognition of this it is agency policy that use of a cell phone while transporting an agency client for any reason other than a clear emergency involving health or well being is prohibited. This includes both making and answering calls. This includes checking the display to determine the source of a call while the vehicle is in motion. This includes listening to a voice mail message. Checking the display may be done while stopped at a stop sign or traffic signal. All other operations must be done while the vehicle is parked in a safe place out of traffic flow. In all other cases, when driving on agency business the use of cell phones is strongly discouraged and should be limited to cases of necessity. Additional rules may apply in program specific applications when transporting clients.

## **CELL PHONES IN THE WORKPLACE-GENERAL RULES**

Since a substantial body of our work involves crisis response we cannot follow the lead of some employers and require cell phones to be turned off in the workplace or during meetings. We must, however, recognize the disruptive nature of cell phone ring tones. Our requirement, therefore is that all cell phones be set to silent or vibrate during any business meeting, whether internal to Family Resources or outside of agency facilities with others. We recommend, but do not require, this setting at all other times in the workplace. We recognize that this makes it impractical to leave the phone in a purse or briefcase when expecting an important call. In that circumstance, other expedients, such as using a belt clip or pocket or relying on the visual display with the phone set to silent should be considered. In addition to these general rules, additional requirements or restrictions may be applied in residential and milieu programs.

## **AGENCY CELL PHONES**

Family Resources does not issue agency cell phones for individual use. For those whose job requirements include the availability of a cell phone, family resources will provide reimbursement in an amount set by administration and consistent with IRS guidelines. Family Resources does issue cell phones to be used by programs for specific purposes, usually for the purpose of emergency

communication. These phones are agency property and are therefore intended to be used for business purposes only. Personal use is strictly prohibited. Cell phone usage is individually tracked and monitored. Any abuse will be noted and result in disciplinary action.