



## **TELEPHONE USAGE POLICY**

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## **1. PREAMBLE**

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- a) Molemole Local Municipality is a service orientated public entity whose legislated mandate is to in the main provide services to residents and in pursuit of the mandate make use of various communication methods and mechanisms including but not limited to systems, utensils, tools and equipments including communication tool such as telephones.
  
- b) Legislation prescribes that the municipality must establish controls and systems to regulate the appropriate and efficient use of municipal resources.
  
- c) The municipality is determined to ensure that telephone contact between staff and other organizations or members of the public is conducted in a professional and efficient manner.
  
- d) The telephone usage policy seeks to provide a framework aimed at ensuring that telephones as a working tool is used appropriately and that call charges are kept to a minimum.
  
- e) Informed by the above commitment the municipality herein lays down procedures for using the telephone and for making and receiving of calls.
  
- f) This policy provides set standards to be complied with by users of municipal telephones and applies equally to internal and external calls.

## **2. PURPOSE**

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2.1 The purpose of this policy is:

- a) To ensure the effective and efficient use of municipal telephones;
- b) To implement mechanisms aimed at minimizing the impact of abuse of council resources;
  - i. To minimize telephone costs for the municipality;
  - ii. To prevent the use of municipal telephones by unauthorized persons;
  - iii. To outline expected recourse for misuse of telephones;
- c) To minimize lost time due to employees devoting council time in pursuit of personal or private interests;
- d) To regulate what is permissible when using council resources;
- e) To ensure that employees borne the cost of using municipal telephone service for private purposes.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

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- a) The Telephone Policy seeks to regulate the usage of the Municipality's telephone to ensure that telephones are available and are used for the conduct of official municipal business, in the direct support of assigned duties and responsibilities of users, and the delivery of municipal services.

## **4. SCOPE**

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- a) The policy applies to all permanent and non permanent employees of the municipality, and is relevant only to the Municipality's office based land line telephones, excluding mobile phones.

## 5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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### 5.1 Sections 62 and 78 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management

Act (Act No. 56 of 2003) places an onus on municipal officials to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the resources of the municipality are used effectively, efficiently and economically.

### 5.2 The Act requires of the officials to take effective and appropriate steps to prevent, within their area of responsibility, any unauthorized, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure and any under – collection of revenue due.

### 5.3 The constitution of the Republic of South Africa further imposes a responsibility on the municipality to operate efficiently.

## 6. TIMEFRAMES

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### 6.1 This Policy becomes effective from the date of approval by Council by way of Council resolution and after been signed off by the Mayor or hi/her designate;

### 6.2 The Policy will be reviewed or reconfirmed as is every twelve months;

### 6.3 The policy shall remain in force until it is appropriately repealed and replaced with another policy.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

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### 7.1 **Council** refers to the Council of Molemole Local Municipality

### 7.2 **Direct lines** means telephone lines not routed through the switchboard

**Employee or official** means a permanent, temporary or part – time or contract employee, in service trainee, learner participating in a learnership or intern but excluding a student and independent contractor

### 7.3 **Land Line Calls** means calls dialed from the fixed telephone lines

**Municipality** refers to Molemole Local Municipality as determined by the Municipal Structures Act

**7.4 Policy means** Telephone Usage Policy

**Private telephone call** refers to use of official telephones for personal or private benefit

**7.5 Unauthorized Persons** means people who are not employees of Council

## **8. PRINCIPLES**

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This policy is underpinned by the principles of

- Fairness
- Equity
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Openness
- Collective responsibility

## **9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **9.1 DEPARTMENT OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

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- a) The Department of Corporate Services, through the Senior Administration Officer, shall be the implementing authority of this policy, and shall facilitate its annual revision.

### **9.2 LINE MANAGERS**

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- a) Line managers have roles and responsibilities as outlined in paragraph 10.3 herein below and to manage telephone usage in their units as they do all other council resources. Line managers are further responsible for:
  - i) Making all employees aware of this policy;
  - ii) Ensuring employee compliance with the policy;
  - iii) Reviewing and evaluating needs and requests for telephone services

### **9.3 MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES**

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- a) All municipal employees are expected to familiarize themselves with the provisions of this policy and to comply with these provisions.

### **9.4 CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE**

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- a) The Corporate Services Portfolio Committee shall be responsible to monitor and play an oversight role regarding implementation of this policy and shall, for this purpose, receive monthly reports on an approved template highlighting successes, challenges and departmental interventions towards achieving policy targets.



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**9.5 COUNCIL**

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- a) Only the Council may approve this policy and any amendment thereafter through a decision of the majority of councilors in attendance of the meeting at which proposals in respect of this policy are considered.

## **10. POLICY DIRECTIVES AND PROCEDURES**

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### **10.1 PROVISION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE**

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- a) It shall be the responsibility of Council to provide all municipal offices or a combination of municipal offices with a reliable telephone service;
- b) Council may centralize its telephone operating system through which all outgoing and incoming calls shall be routed;
- c) The municipal switchboard(s) shall be housed in a safe and secure environment and the switchboard instrument as well as the office in which the switchboard is housed shall be provided with lockable device(s), the keys of which shall be in the possession of a person designated by the Accounting Officer.
- d) It shall be the responsibility of the switchboard operator to ensure that no unauthorized person obtains access to the switchboard(s) of the Council.

### **10.2 TELEPHONE USAGE CONTROL MEASURES**

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#### **10.2.1 Pin Codes**

- a) Each qualifying municipal official shall be allocated a secret telephone access pin code signed for and known to the employee who will be responsible for its protection at all times;
- b) The official in whose name the pin code is issued is responsible and liable for the usage of the pin code;
- c) Should an official suspect and have proof that his/her pin code may be used by another person he/she shall be expected to promptly report the matter to the Senior Admin Officer or a designated person who may upon consideration through a specified operating procedure issue or authorize the reissue of a new pin code;
- d) The owner of the pin code is still liable for any cost arising out of calls by someone who fraudulently obtained it;
- e) Reissuing of pin codes as contemplated under (c) above shall be limited to 2 occurrences per annum;
- f) Management may change pin codes frequently to mitigate fraud risks.

### **10.2.2 Direct and Switchboard(s) Lines**

- a) The Accounting Officer shall determine which officials may have direct lines to their offices for use in connection with performance of their official duties;
- b) Except in the case of employees provided with private telephone lines, all outgoing telephone calls shall be directed through the switchboard(s) of the Council;
- c) It shall be the duty of the person making the call, before dialing the number required to indicate whether the call is official or private in nature;
- d) Where an employee has a direct dialing facility, that employee shall be obliged to maintain the telephone log book and submit it to the respective authority at the end of the month; or alternatively to receive an electronically maintained record for which he/she shall declare and distinguish between private and business calls;
- e) The Council shall provide an electronic device for the monitoring of all outgoing telephone calls;
- f) At the end of each month, the Senior Admin Officer shall circulate a record of calls to officials bearing a pin code to declare private and business calls and provide the Finance Department with a complete list of officials who have made private telephone calls and cost thereof during the month in question;
- g) The Finance Department shall, on the basis of information supplied in respect of private calls made by an official deduct from such an employee's salary the full cost of private calls made including VAT for the month;
- h) No official shall make a call on behalf of or allow any unauthorized person to make a private call from either a direct telephone line or from the switchboard of the Council.

### **10.2.3 Call Restrictions**

- (a) Officials shall only be entitled to make international calls with the specific approval of the Municipal Manager;
- (b) The Municipal Manager shall have the discretion to determine which officials with direct dialing facilities shall be allowed to make international, national, provincial and local calls only and telephone lines shall be suitably barred on the basis of this classification;
- (c) Each official (pin code) shall be restricted to make calls to a specific amount per month and shall be automatically deactivated upon reaching the limit.

#### **10.2.4 Private Calls**

- (a) The Municipality recognizes that there may be some occasions normally due to circumstances or an emergency where it is necessary for members of staff to make private calls.
- (b) Staff should be aware, however, that the making of or receiving private telephone calls is by local arrangement only and is, therefore, a privilege and not an automatic right. The Municipality is therefore not obliged to provide allowance for private calls by officials.
- (c) When making or receiving private telephone calls staff should take account of the following regulations :
  - (i) The making/receiving of private telephone calls should be kept to a minimum and be of short duration;
  - (ii) Private telephone calls should be timed whenever possible to ensure minimum disruption both to the work of the individual and to the workload of colleagues;
  - (iii) It is not acceptable for staff to conduct regular, private business or administration using the Municipality's telephone network. Any such abuse of the telephone system could result in the instances being considered to be of fraudulent nature, which may lead to disciplinary or criminal action against an official.
  - (iv) Such abuse could also result in the withdrawal of the facility to make private telephone calls.
- (d) The telephone system is an organizational resource and use of the telephone can and may be monitored and an itemized listing of telephone numbers for a period will be produced.

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### **10.3 CONTROL PROCEDURE**

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- (a) The Corporate Services Department through the Senior Admin Officer is responsible for monitoring the implementation to ensure that it functions as it is supposed.
- (b) Line Managers are responsible for monitoring the conduct of their subordinations to ensure that they use the system for their official duties.
- (c) S/he shall make such relevant comments for attention or information relating to his/her subordinates; which shall, where necessary, be used as evidence should a disciplinary hearing or such appropriate actions be necessary to be taken due to persistent abuse of the system by an employee.

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### **10.4 TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS**

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- a) The Budget & Treasury Department shall issue out monthly telephone statements of account for each official.
- b) Telephone statements shall be delivered to the managers, who will inspect such statements before distributing them to the respective employees.
- c) The Budget & Treasury Department shall make payroll deductions from employees' salaries in respect of private calls made.
- d) Each staff member shall after declaring the private calls sign the statement as an authorization that the cost of their private calls be deducted from their salaries.

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## **11. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

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- a) This policy will be evaluated every year to cater for legislative changes and in response to operating changes.

## 12. ATTACHMENTS

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- a) Official /Private calls register

## 13. POLICIES REPEALED

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- a) Any prior existing policy or practice that regulated telephone usage to the extent that it refers to Molemole Municipality's telephone usage or any of its provisions.

## 14. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

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a) Date of Approval by Council 31 May 2009

b) Signed on Behalf of the Council