

OCO, Inc.

Communication Protocols

Policy: Communication is essential to the successful achievement of OCO's mission. All relevant, professional communications need to occur expeditiously and are responded to in a like-wise manner. Communications will happen on a consistent, professional level and provide for clear and full exchange of information while projecting a positive image of OCO. This policy includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, text messaging, radios, computers and other similar devices. This policy does not apply to two-way radios installed on OCO buses.

Section 1 - Standard communication protocol.

A. All outside calls to the agency will be answered with the uniform salutation of "OCO, this is (your name), how may I help you?" As appropriate, after the identification of name the receiver may also identify their program/division or service before asking "how may I help you? Internal call may be answered simply with "This is (your name)."

1. A caller's wait time while on hold should not exceed two (2) minutes.
2. Transfers of callers will include the uniform response of "I'm now transferring you to (name) at extension (number). If we are accidentally disconnected, the correct number to call is (number)."
3. It is expected that all employees will strive to return calls within 24 hours.

B. Auditory ringers on all portable communication devices will need to be disabled whenever the employee enters a meeting, is providing transportation for consumers or is at their workstation. Devices can be set on 'vibrate' or to automatically transfer callers to voice mail. Exceptions may be applied to on-call phones.

1. If a work call is taken on a portable communication device during a meeting, the employee will respond to the caller by saying 'Please hold', then excuse themselves from the meeting and re-engage the caller only after the employee has fully exited the meeting and found a secluded area to converse that will not disturb the meeting or others in nearby work stations.
2. NYS motor vehicle laws will be followed regarding use of communication devices during transportation. Portable communication devices use by the operator of an OCO bus is:
 - a. Not permitted for use during the operation of OCO Transportation Division buses.

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- b. Only to be used after the bus is stopped in a safe and secure location.
- c. The responsibility of the assigned operators of park-out buses.
- d. To be used for special service trips that run after transportation dispatch operating hours (nights, weekends).

Section II - Agency Issued Equipment and Land Lines.

- A. Employees may, if they are mandated by position description to carry a portable communication device, apply to receive the established agency stipend and use their own personal devices in lieu of accepting agency issued equipment. This option is generally not allowable for 'on-call' staff that must rotate the agency issued phone. When an employee accepts agency issued equipment, the following conditions will apply:
- 1. Employees shall be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the operation; proper handling and recharging of the agency issued portable communication devices. Manufacturer instructions must be followed.
 - 2. Agency issued portable communication devices are to be used only to conduct agency business.
 - 3. Agency issued equipment should not be used for personal use. Emergency situations are an exemption to this restriction. Supervisory notification of emergency use is expected within a timely period.
 - 4. NYS motor vehicle laws will be followed regarding use of communication devices during transportation. Employees are responsible for keeping the communication devices charged and secured against loss, damage or theft. Employees shall be responsible for the costs of replacing or repairing devices as a result of misuse, loss or damage due to negligence.
 - 5. The portable communication device must remain turned on and readily available at all times during on-call hours and normal work hours. Auditory ringers will need to be disabled whenever the employee enters a meeting or is at their workstation. Devices can be set on 'vibrate'. Exceptions may be applied to on-call phones.
 - 6. Bills for all agency portable communication devices are monitored. Any

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unidentified and/or unauthorized outgoing calls or incoming calls will be the financial responsibility of the employee and corrective discipline or termination may be administered for any misuse of agency equipment.

7. Text Messaging services and other similar cost features should not normally be used. If such features are occasionally used for appropriate agency business, please make a note of this and forward it to the Division Fiscal Assistant.
8. Directory assistance calls are an additional charge to the bill above the contract minutes. If you must use the directory assistance, Divisions may require you to make a note of this and forward it to the Division Financial Assistant.
9. Operational problems with any portable communication device will need to be reported to the Financial Assistant. If the portable communication device needs repairs or replacement, please turn in the device to the Financial Assistant and complete an Information Systems Work Order describing the problem. If the device is an on-call phone, notify your supervisor immediately.

Section III - Personal Equipment.

1. These are personally owned portable communication devices used by an employee for their own personal business. Personal portable communication devices can be used to conduct personal business when:
 - a. The employee is in a private area and on break, lunch, a lay-over or has been authorized by their immediate supervisor.
 - i. An emergency situation arises that makes prior authorization impossible or impractical. Supervisory notification of emergency use is expected within a timely period.
 - ii. Use of personal communication devices should not be conducted with consumers present or in the immediate area.
2. If a call is taken on a personal portable communication device during travel while on work time, the employee should comply fully with the established NYS motor vehicle law on use of portable communication devices and vehicles.

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3. Auditory ringers on all personal portable communication devices will need to be disabled whenever the employee is in the workplace, providing transportation of consumers, enters a meeting or is at their workstation. Devices can be set on 'vibrate' or to automatically transfer callers to voice mail.

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