

ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

Policies and Procedures

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This DIRECTIVE outlines ARS policy on the use of voice telecommunication services.

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1. POLICY

It is the policy of ARS to:

- Acquire and manage telecommunications services in accordance with DR 3300-1, and other pertinent laws and regulations.
- Make maximum use of competition to achieve optimum service at the lowest cost.
- Encourage cost control in the management and use of telecommunication services.

2. ABBREVIATIONS

- ARS - Agricultural Research Service
- DR - Departmental Regulations
- FTS - Federal Telecommunications System
- GSA - General Services Administration
- LAO/T - Location Administrative Officer/Technician
- NFC - National Finance Center
- SIBAC - Simplified Intergovernmental Billing and Collection
- SMDR - Station Message Detail Recording (call information)
- US - United States

3. FTS USERS' GUIDE

GSA manages FTS and publishes a GSA FTS Telephone Users' Guide and distributes it to all users located in the cities listed in the Guide.

Instructions and procedures in the use of FTS are fully outlined in the Guide.

4. USE OF COMMERCIAL NETWORK FOR OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Toll Call Register. A log must be maintained for all long distance calls using non-FTS or commercial facilities in order to satisfy the requirements in E 2. It is recommended that if installed equipment has or can be upgraded to provide SMDR, that it be utilized for this purpose. This will eliminate the need for manual record keeping. The SMDR data can be printed or if processed by a call accounting system, the data can provide a variety of management reports regarding cost and utilization.

NOTE: SMDR provides a detail record of telephone calls (i.e., originating station, number dialed, date, time, and duration).

Verification of Telephone Toll Call Charges

- The NFC will furnish ARS locations, on a sample basis, a listing of toll calls originating from that location for verification of telephone toll call payments made to GSA through the SIBAC Systems. The designated responsible officer (i.e. LAO/T, Property Officer, etc.) shall verify the toll calls listed.
- Refer to DIRECTIVE 340.1 and the NFC Procedures Manual, Title II, Chapter 3, Section 3.3, Telephones, for procedures for the verification of telephone toll call payments made through NFC.

Long-distance telephone calls using commercial telephone facilities are authorized when:

- A non-US Government office requests you to originate a "collect" call to that office.
- FTS service is not available.
- Calls are placed from non-US Government telephones.
- The FTS line is busy and the call is of such an urgent or emergency nature that it must be placed immediately

While in Travel Status - Employees on official travel who are authorized to make long-distance telephone calls may make them over commercial lines, provided it is impractical to use FTS. Employees shall reverse charges, if possible, when calling their offices, or use personal funds and claim reimbursement on their travel vouchers.

5. AUTHORIZED PERSONAL USE OF TELEPHONES AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

The following are examples of telephone calls authorized at Government expense, provided they are of reasonable duration (average of 5 minutes), reasonable frequency, and within the local commuting area (i.e., the area from which the employee regularly commutes.)

From The Permanent Duty Station:

- Employees may make calls to notify family, doctor, etc., when an employee is injured on the job.
- When an employee is required to work overtime without advance notice, the employee may make a call to advise his/her family of the change in schedule or to make alternate

transportation or child care arrangements.

- Employees may make a brief daily call to speak to a spouse or minor children (or to those responsible for their children, such as school or day care officials) to "see how they are.
- Employees may make brief calls to locations within the local commuting area that can be reached only during working hours, such as to a local Government agency or a physician.
- Employees may make brief calls to locations within the local commuting area to arrange for emergency repairs to his/her automobile or residence.

While In Domestic Travel Status:

- Employees traveling for more than one night in the US on Government business may make a brief long-distance call to his/her residence. However, not more than an average of one call of 5 minutes per day of this nature is authorized. Exceptions to this policy can be made by the supervisor authorizing official on a case-by-case basis.
- An employee traveling on Government business, who is delayed due to official business or transportation complications, and may make a long-distance call to notify his/her family of a schedule change.

While In International Travel Status:

Employees are authorized to make the following calls while traveling internationally (i.e., traveling for more than one night on Government business from the US to a foreign country or from an overseas post to the US):

- An average of one call home per week or fraction thereof, station-to-station, of approximately 5 minutes.
- A call to notify his/her family of a delay in the scheduled return time due to official business or transportation complications.

6. CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Expenses for authorized telephone calls may be claimed on an AD-616, Travel Voucher (either for the trip in which the call occurred or on a subsequent travel voucher), or SF-1164, Imprest Fund Voucher.

7. AUTHORIZED USE OF GOVERNMENT TELEPHONES AT THE CALLERS EXPENSE

Personal calls that must be made during working hours may be made over the commercial long-distance network utilizing Government telephones, if the call is:

- Charged to the employee's home phone number or other non-Government number (third number call);
- Made to an 800 toll-free number;
- Charged to the called party if a non-Government number (collect call); or
- Charged to a personal telephone credit card.

And the call meets the following criteria:

- It does not adversely affect the performance of official duties by the employee or the employee's organization;
- It is of reasonable duration and frequency; and
- It reasonably could not have been made at another time; or
- It is provided for in a collective bargaining agreement that is consistent with these regulations, or executed before the effective date of these regulations but continuing only until the term of the agreement expires.

8. UNAUTHORIZED USE OF GOVERNMENT TELEPHONES

Making unauthorized telephone calls at Government expense with the intent to later reimburse the Government is prohibited. Any use of Government telephones, for other than official business or as permitted under 5 and 7 above is considered unauthorized. Locations are not authorized to install additional telephones or to increase levels of service on existing telephone systems merely to accommodate circumstances for employee calls authorized by this DIRECTIVE.

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