

MS 834 TELEPHONE AND FAX USE

Date: 10/15/97

Office: Information Resources Management (M/IRM)

Supersedes: 11/24/92, 05/13/86, 08/22/85, 09/07/84

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.0 Purpose
 - 2.0 Policy
 - 2.1 Local Authorized Personal Calls
 - 2.2 Long Distance Authorized Personal Calls
 - 3.0 Types of Calls
 - 3.1 Domestic Calls
 - 3.2 International Calls
 - 3.3 Non-DTS-PO International Calls
 - 3.4 Telephone Calls from Outside the Agency
 - 3.4.1 Federal Calling Cards (Fedcards)
 - 3.4.2 Non-Fedcard Calls During Authorized Travel
 - 3.4.3 Collect Calls
 - 3.4.4 Third Party Calls
 - 3.5 Cellular Phones
 - 3.6 Faxes (Facsimile Transmissions)
 - 3.6.1 Appropriate Faxes
 - 3.6.2 Fax Logbook
 - 4.0 Monthly Call Detail Reports
 - 4.1 At PC/Washington and Regional Offices
 - 4.2 At Overseas Posts
-

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A Call Detail Report Cover Sheet

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Manual Section is to establish policy and procedures for the use of local, domestic long distance, and international long distance telephone calls. These policies are applicable to all U. S. offices and overseas Peace Corps Posts.

2.0 POLICY

The use of telephones and faxes by Peace Corps is governed by rules set forth by the Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR) and the Office of Government Ethics in the Code of Federal Regulations. These regulations govern use of Peace Corps' telephone services for local and long distance calls and faxes in the United States and overseas.

The regulations require that telephone and fax use be only for official business calls, emergency calls, and authorized personal calls (see paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 below). Making unauthorized phone calls may result in disciplinary, civil, or criminal action.

2.1 Local Authorized Personal Calls

Telephone calls may be authorized when they do not adversely affect the employee's performance; they are of a reasonable duration and frequency; and they could not reasonably have been made at another time.

Examples of authorized personal calls:

- An employee is required to work overtime without advance notice and calls to advise family of the change in schedule or to make alternative transportation or child care arrangements.
- An employee makes a brief daily call to speak to a spouse, minor children, or those responsible for the children.
- An employee makes brief calls to places that can be reached only during working hours, such as a local Government agency, bank, or physician.

2.2 Long Distance Authorized Personal Calls

Long distance calls must meet the criteria in paragraph 2.1 and be one of the following types of calls:

- Collect call (to a non-Government number)
- Personal credit card call
- Call charged to a third party (non-Government number)
- Toll free call

NOTE: Employees may not charge personal, long distance calls to the Peace Corps except in emergencies.

3.0 TYPES OF CALLS

3.1 Domestic Calls

All outgoing domestic calls from PC/Washington and the regional recruiting and administrative offices use the Federal Telecommunications System (FTS). FTS is Peace Corps' primary carrier. It is a mandatory Government Services Administration (GSA) inter-city telecommunications contract that provides a host of telecommunications services. Peace Corps employees use FTS for placing all official calls to FTS and non-FTS (non-governmental) numbers within the 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U. S. Virgin Islands.

3.2 International Calls

Many overseas Posts are now connected to PC/Washington through the Diplomatic Telecommunications Service -Program Office (DTS-PO) network. DTS-PO supports voice (including 1-800 and FTS), fax, and limited electronic mail capabilities at substantially reduced cost over commercial rates. A DTS-PO Guidebook, listing DTS-PO Posts and instructions on accessing DTS-PO, is available from Network Management and Communications (M/IRM/NM& C) or on the Peace Corps Intranet.

At PC/Washington, DTS-PO calls may be placed by dialing the DTS-PO number and the Post phone number (from the DTS-PO Guidebook). Overseas Posts on DTS-PO can call PC/Washington and other DTS-PO Posts the same way. DTS-PO calls from Posts to U. S. numbers other than PC/Washington are

billed to Posts at domestic commercial rates from Washington, DC to that number. Or, with a FEDCARD (see paragraph 3.4.1), Posts will be billed at greatly reduced FTS rates.

3.3 Non-DTS-PO International Calls

Other international calls are placed over a commercial carrier. M/IRM/NM& C recommends that offices record international calls not made over the DTS-PO network and retain the record until the call detail report is distributed (see paragraph 4.0).

3.4 Telephone Calls from Outside the Agency

3.4.1 Federal Calling Cards (Fedcards)

The FTS2000 Federal Calling Card (FEDCARD) is the preferred method of placing authorized calls from outside the agency. Calls made using a FEDCARD are billed at substantially lower rates than any commercial provider. The calling card should also be used at PC/Washington and the regional recruiting and administrative offices to place multi-party domestic conference calls (at FTS rates).

FEDCARDS should be used by all staff members whose duties require the placement of authorized domestic and international telephone calls when away from their official duty station (e. g., staff on travel status, Medical Duty Officer, Special Services Duty Officer, and others as deemed appropriate). FEDCARDS are also issued to selected staff at Posts with DTS-PO access.

To obtain a FEDCARD, contact M/IRM/NM& C. FEDCARDS are issued to individual Peace Corps employees. They will not be given to an office for general distribution or issued in the name of a position or title.

The employee is responsible for safeguarding the calling card to prevent its unauthorized use. Any unauthorized use of the calling card is the responsibility of the authorized card holder. In the event the card is lost or stolen the card holder will immediately contact M/IRM/NM & C so service may be canceled and a new card issued. Upon separation from the Peace Corps, the employee is required to return the calling card to M/IRM/NM & C for cancellation.

Calls placed using the FEDCARD will be billed to the Peace Corps' normal FTS monthly billing and will appear on offices' monthly call detail reports. Except for a minimal equipment charge that may be applied by a hotel for in-room dialing, no claim for reimbursement is authorized when the FEDCARD is used.

3.4.2 Non-fedcard Calls During Authorized Travel

Peace Corps employees without FEDCARDS may make official calls but must receive authorization in advance on Form PC-1537 Authorization of Official Travel.

Official telephone calls from hotel rooms must be itemized and receipts certified by the traveler. The receipts are then submitted with completed and approved travel vouchers.

Official telephone calls made from other areas may be placed through a commercial operator with a request that the operator provide his or her name or operator number, time, and charges. This information must be retained, documented, and submitted with the completed and approved travel voucher.

In lieu of the above, calls may be charged to "home" telephone numbers and a copy of monthly itemized billings furnished by the telephone company submitted with the completed and approved travel voucher.

3.4.3 Collect Calls

Collect calls to Peace Corps are authorized only if FTS capability is not available and the call is official business. Collect calls should be recorded by the employee making the calls and retained until the monthly call detail report is distributed.

3.4.4 Third Party Calls

A third party call is defined as a call originating from one telephone to another, being charged to a third telephone. Peace Corps will not accept charges as the third party telephone.

3.5 Cellular Phones

Peace Corps-issued cellular phones must be used for authorized calls only (see paragraph 2.0). Employees may not reimburse Peace Corps for calls.

3.6 Faxes (Facsimile Transmissions)

A fax is subject to the same standards for use as a long distance telephone call.

3.6.1 Appropriate Faxes

A fax transmission should be limited to official business. Information that should not be transmitted via fax include:

- Material that is, or includes, information of a classified, confidential, or sensitive nature
- Privacy Act Information
- Formal correspondence between PC/Washington and Post (with the exception of a medical emergency) when proper restrictions can not be maintained on both communication ends

3.6.2 Fax Logbook

It is recommended that a logbook be maintained for long distance fax transmissions.

4.0 MONTHLY CALL DETAIL REPORTS

4.1 At PC/Washington and Regional Offices

M/IRM/NM& C generates and distributes, to office heads, a monthly call detail report that lists each office's long distance calls and faxes (see Attachment A).

Office heads should review their call detail reports. It is a management tool that may be used to monitor office phone calls. At their discretion, office heads may distribute the reports to their staff for confirmation of official calls. Peace Corps does not collect from employees to pay for personal calls. Office heads should instruct employees to follow the phone policy stated in paragraph 2.0.

4.2 At Overseas Posts

Country Directors should review itemized phone bills monthly. If an itemized phone bill is not available, Posts are strongly encouraged to install a computerized call accounting system. Information Resources Management (M/IRM) can provide guidance in the purchase.

Country Directors have the discretion to set up a call collection system for unauthorized calls if it is cost-effective to do so. Any monies collected should be credited to the obligation used to pay the telephone bill. Staff must still follow the phone policy stated in paragraph 2.0.