



*State of North Carolina*  
*Department of Public Safety*  
*Prisons*

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**POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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Chapter: D  
Section: .0800  
Title: **Inmate Access to Telephone**  
Issue Date: 05/13/14  
Supersedes: 04/01/08

**.0801 GENERAL**

- (a) The Department of Public Safety, Prisons extends telephone privileges to inmates as part of its overall correctional management. Telephone privileges are a supplemental means of maintaining communication ties with family and the community to contribute to an inmate's personal development. This communication takes place within the prison facility from a provided inmate telephone.
- (b) The maintenance of family and social relationships as well as pre-release planning activities are integral parts of the overall rehabilitation process that can be strengthened through communication by telephone. In consideration of this, Prisons will establish inmate access to telephone privileges within all correctional facilities. Inmate access to telephones will vary by facility security level and inmate custody classification. To maintain security and ensure the safety of the institution staff and inmate population, inmate access to telephones shall be managed carefully and may be suspended if necessary.

**.0802 RESPONSIBILITY**

- (a) The Prisons Director shall designate a staff coordinator to assist in telephone program management requirements. Coordination of telephone requirements with Department of Public Safety Purchasing, Prisons Budget staff and the General Council's Office and Prisons Operations staff is essential to the management of telephone privileges.
- (b) The Prisons Telephone Coordinator will ensure that contracts providing telephone services for inmates comply with all applicable state and federal regulations. Contracts are based on rates and surcharges that are commensurate with those charged to the general public for like services and any deviation from ordinary consumer rates reflects actual costs associated with the provision of services in a correctional setting. The contract for inmate telephone services will provide the broadest range of calling options determined by the agency administrator to be consistent with the requirements of sound correctional management. The contract for inmate telephone services will provide the broadest range for calling options determined by the Division coordinator to be consistent with the requirements of sound correctional management.
- (c) The Facility Head is responsible for developing specific telephone procedures that comply with the minimum standards established by this policy and procedures. The Facility Head shall designate a telephone program coordinator who is responsible for the management of the facility inmate telephone program.

- (d) Program/Case Management and custody staff will provide assistance in the management of inmate access to telephones.

### **.0803 PROCEDURES**

(a) Availability of Telephones

- (1) Each correctional facility should establish telephones or telephone banks in sufficient numbers so as to provide appropriate access to telephones by inmates for outgoing calls.
- (2) Telephones are to be wall-mounted and have capability for local, long distance and international calls. Only collect and debit calls are allowed.
- (3) Inmate telephones have the capability to enable either facility staff or the Prisons Telecommunication Section to render the telephones inoperable during periods of emergency or other appropriate times.
- (4) Inmates and the called party will be notified by computer generated voice that all calls are subject to monitoring and/or recording and that the telephone call is being made from a prison facility.
- (5) The establishment of an appropriate number of telephones or telephone banks is authorized as a legitimate inmate welfare expenditure subject to the Prisons approval process.

(b) Inmate Access

(1) Minimum Security Facilities

- (A) Regular population inmates assigned at minimum security facilities should have open access to telephones as operational considerations permit. Insofar as possible, correctional staff should routinely supervise inmate use of these telephones.
- (B) Inmates are permitted to make only collect and debit calls, and each call will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes. Telephones will automatically terminate when the time limit expires.
- (C) Minimum custody inmates may utilize the telephones for maintaining family ties, contacting prospective employers or, communicating with friends or relatives as a part of pre-release planning activities or other legitimate purposes that serve to better prepare the inmate for transition to the community.

- (2) Medium Security Facilities
  - (A) Regular population inmates assigned to a medium security facility will be provided scheduled access to telephones as operational considerations permit. Correctional staff will routinely supervise inmate use of these telephones.
  - (B) Inmates are permitted to make only collect and debit calls and each call will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes. Telephones will automatically terminate the call when the time limit expires.
  - (C) Medium custody inmates may utilize the telephones for maintaining family and social relationships or other legitimate purposes that serve to better prepare the inmate for transition to the community.
- (3) Close Security Facilities
  - (A) Regular population inmates assigned to a close security facility will be provided scheduled access to telephones as operational considerations permit. Correctional staff will supervise inmate use of these telephones.
  - (B) Inmates are permitted to make only collect and debit calls and each call will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes. Telephones will automatically terminate the call when the time limit expires.
  - (C) Close custody inmates will be permitted at least two (2) telephone calls per calendar month. Facility Heads are authorized to allow more than two (2) calls per month based on facility operations and capabilities. Close custody inmates may utilize the telephones for maintaining family and social relationships or other legitimate purposes that serve to better prepare the inmate for transition to the community.
- (4) Special Populations
  - (A) Inmates assigned to safekeeping, Administrative Segregation, Intensive Control, Maximum Control, Protective Control and death row will be allowed telephone privileges based on control and safety considerations as designated by the Facility Head.
  - (B) Inmates assigned to Disciplinary Segregation and High Security Maximum Control will be allowed limited telephone privileges based on control and safety considerations as designated by the Facility Head.
  - (C) Mental Health In-Patient - Mental Health In-patient inmates generally should be provided telephone access consistent with facility security

classification and inmate custody level. The inmate Mental Health Treatment Team generally will manage inmate telephone access.

- (D) Security Threat Group Members - Guidelines for telephone use by STG members are detailed in the Division's Security Threat Group policy in the Prisons Security Manual .1700.

At the discretion of the Facility Head, these special populations may be involved in planned telephone privileges or access may exceed the established policies, as a program incentive or treatment strategy.

#### **.0804 OTHER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

- (a) Inmate participation in the telephone program may be suspended through the disciplinary process as a form of punishment. In addition, the Facility Head is authorized to terminate telephone privileges for specific abuse of telephone regulations or to maintain security of the facility and ensure the safety of staff and other inmates. In such cases, the Facility Head must document circumstances and rationale for the termination of inmate telephone privileges.
- (b) Emergency calls may be approved by the Facility Head or designee. There also may be occasions when inmates need to be allowed to make local non-collect calls for unusual circumstances such as work release, death in family and emergency situations, etc. Facilities should develop guidelines for allowing inmates to place these calls utilizing facility telephones.
- (c) Calls to and/or from attorneys – Please refer to Prisons Policy G.0200 Court Related Procedures, section .0206.
- (d) Inmates are not authorized to receive incoming calls on Prisons established telephones.
- (e) Each inmate will be assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to be used for making phones calls. An inmate shall not share his or her PIN with any other inmate. No inmate is permitted to make calls with another inmate's PIN. Violation of this policy provision is subject to disciplinary action, Chapter B.0200, Inmate Disciplinary Procedures, .0202(c)(c11).
- (f) Inmates shall not use the telephone for the purpose of harassing or threatening any public official or member of the public.
- (g) Inmate shall not use the telephone to communicate with any Department of Public Safety employee.
- (h) Inmates shall not use the telephone for the purpose of conducting fraudulent or illegal activities.

- (i) Inmates shall not circumvent security features of the phone system when making calls.
- (j) Inmates are prohibited from calling a victim of the crime, minor, or a member of the public who requests in writing to have his/her telephone number blocked.
- (k) During emergency or unique circumstances, the Facility Head or designee is authorized to allow inmates to use the facility telephones. When this discretion is exercised, the use of a Prisons business telephone by the inmate must be documented in writing for auditing purposes.
- (l) Inmates with hearing and/or speech disabilities and inmates who wish to communicate with parties who have such disabilities are afforded access to a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), or comparable equipment. Facilities requiring such equipment must request assistance through the Prisons Administration Social Work Program Director. Telephones with volume control are also made available to inmates with hearing impairment.

*George Solomon* 5/13/14  
Director of Prisons      Date

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