



TELEPHONE USAGE POLICY

KOUGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

TELEPHONE USAGE POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

- (a) Kouga 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 equipment including communication tools 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 are used appropriately and that call charges are kept to a minimum.
- e) To achieve the above commitment the municipality herein lays down procedures for using the telephones 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

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;
- c) By minimising telephone costs for the municipality;
- d) To prevent the use of municipal telephones by unauthorized persons;
- e) To outline expected recourse for misuse of telephones;
- f) To minimize lost time due to employees devoting council time in pursuit of personal or private interests;

- g) To regulate what is permissible when using council resources;
- h) To ensure that employees bear the cost of using the municipal telephone service for private purposes.

3. **OBJECTIVES**

- a) The Telephone Policy seeks to regulate the usage of the Municipality's telephones so as to ensure that telephones are available and are used for the conduct of official municipal business.

4. **SCOPE**

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

5. **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 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 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**

- 6.1 This Policy becomes effective from the date of approval by Council;
- 6.2 The Policy will be reviewed or reconfirmed as and when necessary;
- 6.3 The policy shall remain in force until it is repealed and replaced with another policy.

7. **DEFINITIONS**

"Council" means the Council of Kouga Local Municipality.

"Direct lines" means telephone lines not routed through the switchboard.

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

"Land Line Calls" means calls dialled from the fixed telephone lines.

"Municipality" means the Kouga Local Municipality as determined by the Municipal Structures Act.

"Policy" means the Telephone Usage Policy.

"Private telephone call" means the use of official council telephones for personal benefit.

"Unauthorized Persons" mean people who are not employees of Council.

8. **PRINCIPLES**

This policy is underpinned by the principles of:

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

9. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

9.1 **Manager: Administration**

- a) The Manager: Administration Services shall be responsible for implementing this policy, and shall facilitate its revision.

9.2 **Managers**

- a) Managers are responsible as, outlined in paragraph 10.3 herein, to manage telephone usage in their departments. Managers are further responsible for:
 - i) Making all employees in their departments aware of this policy;
 - ii) Ensuring employees comply with the policy;
 - iii) Reviewing and evaluating needs and requests for telephone services.

9.3 **Employees**

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

10. **POLICY DIRECTIVES AND PROCEDURE**

10.1 **Provision of Telephone services**

- 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) The 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/s designated by the Accounting Officer.
- d) It shall be the responsibility of the switchboard operator/s to ensure that no unauthorized person obtains access to the switchboard(s) of the Council.

11. **TELEPHONE CONTROL MEASURES**

11.1 **Telephone Access Control**

- a) Each qualifying municipal official shall be allocated a secret telephone access pin code signed for and known only 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 is being used by some other person he/she shall immediately report the matter to the Manager of Administration, or any designated official, who will authorize the issue of a new pin code;
- d) The official in whose name the pin code was issued is still liable for any cost arising from private calls made from that official's telephone;
- e) Re-issuing of pin codes as provided for under (c) above shall be limited to two (2) occurrences per annum;
- f) Management may change pin codes to mitigate fraud risks.

11.2 **Direct and Switchboard(s) Lines**

- a) The Council shall provide an electronic device for the monitoring of all outgoing telephone calls;

- b) All employees who have been issued with a pin code shall be obliged to keep and maintain a telephone log book to record all private calls made.
- c) All employees who have been issued with a pin code will be provided with an electronically produced list of calls that were recorded under their pin code number and the employee will be required to indicate thereon which calls were for private use and be given a cut-off date by which the forms must be returned to the designated official;
- d) The total cost of all calls made will be deducted from an official's salary if the employee fails to indicate which calls were for private use and fails to return the list by the cut-off date;
- e) The Finance Department shall, on the basis of information supplied in respect of private calls made by an official deduct from such employee's salary the full cost of private calls made, including VAT, for the month.

11.3 **Call Restrictions**

- a) Each official who has been issued with a (pin code) shall be restricted to make calls to a specific pre-determined amount per month and on reaching this limit he/she shall be automatically deactivated.
- b) Officials who have reached their limit will be required to give written explanation as to why their limit has been exceeded.
- c) If for reason that the limit was exceeded due to a large number of private calls having been made and as a result thereof the officials are unable to perform their duties as is required of them in terms of their contract or job description such official will be subject to disciplinary steps.

11.4 **Private Calls**

- a) The Municipality recognizes that there may be some occasions, due to abnormal circumstances or an emergency that has arisen, where it is necessary for members of staff to make private calls. These calls are permitted but social calls to family and friends are not encouraged and will be monitored through the provisions of section 10.2.2 above.
- b) The making or receiving of private telephone calls is not a right and must be considered as a concession not to be abused.
- c) When making or receiving private telephone calls officials must apply the following principles:

- i) The duration of the call must be kept short;
- ii) They must cause a minimum disruption both to the work of the individual and to the workload of colleagues.

12. **POLICIES REPEALED**

- a) Any other existing policy or practice that regulated telephone usage for the Municipality is superseded by this policy document.

13. **APPROVAL OF POLICY**

- a) Date of approval by Council: 12 July 2013
- b) Council Resolution No: 13/07/AME1