University of Rhode Island
Office of Controller
Cell Phone Stipend Procedures
(Including URI Athletics Department)

An option is available for URI full time state employees to be paid a stipend instead of being issued a URI cell phone or electronic communication device. A stipend will be issued to those employees in positions authorized for URI cell phone usage. Direct deposit is a condition of the cell phone stipend.

The following positions are eligible for the cell phone stipend:

- President, Provost and Vice President
- Athletics Director; Deputy Athletics Director; Associate Athletics Directors
- Head Coaches; Assistant Coaches; Operations Managers
- Other designated staff as authorized by the President, Provost, Vice President or Athletics Director

Other Positions can be recommended by department head and/or individual’s supervisor upon careful review using the following criteria:

- Critical decision maker on an institutional level
- Required to be on-call (24/7) as documented per job requirement or on URI emergency list
- Safety requirements signify having a cell phone is an integral part of performing duties as documented in position’s job description
- More than 50% of work is conducted in the field as verified by direct supervisor
- Required to be contacted on a regular basis outside one’s standard working hours
- Other business requirement as defined and endorsed by department head

The following employees are not eligible for the cell phone stipend:

- Employees who do not meet the above criteria
- Employees that utilize “departmental” cell phone or push to talk
- Employees with URI provided cell phones

The following guidelines must be followed:

- Employee must sign up for direct deposit. Failure to sign up for direct deposit may cause stipend to be canceled.
- Cell Phone Plan must be adequate to meet definition of appropriate stipend level.
- URI Department is required to budget the annual cell phone stipend for employees in account 5203.
- Cell phone, accessories, service plans or other fees will not be purchased, licensed or directly billed to URI for those individuals that elect the stipend.
- Employee is responsible for the purchase of cell phone equipment to be used for cell service indicated by approved stipend level. Costs for cosmetic or technical extras are the responsibility of the employee.
- URI will not pay any plan cancellation fee or penalties for early termination incurred by employee.
- The cell phone service is personally owned by the employee and may therefore be used for both personal and business calls. An employee who receives a cell phone stipend must maintain active service for the duration of the stipend which corresponds to the stipend level approved.
- A copy of the front page (proof of service) of the employee’s cell phone bill must be submitted to the Employee’s Department Business Office with the approved annual “Cell Phone Stipend Request” for new requests.
- Cell Phone Stipend cannot be charged to a Grant (Fund 500).
- Annual renewals need to be completed prior to the 1st pay period of every year.
Reimbursement Stipend Levels

No Stipend: Employee who has light to moderate usage of the cell phone for business purposes.

1st Level: Employee who has moderate to heavy usage of the cell phone for business purposes; approximately 5-10 hours/week. The performance of the employee’s duties necessitates moderate business use of a cell phone for voice, email and/or data. The stipend for this level is intended to cover a portion of the employee’s expense for monthly service.

2nd Level: Employee who has very heavy usage of the cell phone for business purposes; approximately 10-20 hours/week. The performance of the employee’s duties necessitate excessive business use of a cell phone for voice, email and/or data, typically due to regular travel on behalf of the university or at location not serviced by university-funded phone and internet connections. The stipend for this level is intended to cover a greater portion of the monthly service.

3rd Level: Extraordinary circumstances require additional or expanded cell or data service not included in Levels 2 and 3. Please provide written justification for need of expanded service.

Taxation: The cell phone stipend is taxable income to the employee; therefore the individual will be taxed according to the IRS and State regulations. Employee will receive a separate payment from URI PeopleSoft Internal Payroll. The stipend will be reported to IRS on form W-2.

Rates: Each level will be reviewed and established by the URI Controller’s Office annually and effective starting with the first pay period of each fiscal year. The stipend amount will be based on a cell company which offers a State of RI employee discount. Currently, Verizon Wireless offers a 15% discount to State of RI employees.

Transition Process for Employees with URI cell phone electing stipend:

- Existing URI cell phone service commitments must expire before transitioning to a cell phone stipend or be able to cancel without any termination fee chargeable to URI. Changes to existing URI purchase orders must be modified when transitioning to a cell phone stipend.

- All costs related to the purchase and usage of the employee’s personal cell phone will be the responsibility of the employee, including any cancellation/termination fees or penalties incurred.

- If employee wants to retain their current URI cell phone number, they need to contact the cell phone provider for assistance. (Verizon transfer of billing responsibilities form must be completed).

- If employee wants to retain the URI cell phone equipment, and it is less than 2 years old, the employee may pay URI the original cost of the phone, less depreciation costs. Contact the Controller’s Office for this option.

- Employees currently issued URI cell phones will be required to submit the “Cell Phone Stipend Request” form to the Employee’s Department Business Office and follow the “New Request and Renewals” procedures listed below.
New Requests and Renewal Instructions

1. “Cell Phone Stipend Request” form is started by employee and forwarded to Department Head for review and consideration. New requestors must provide a proof of service to Employee’s Department Business Office to acquire Department approval. If Department Head agrees a stipend is merited, the signed form is sent to the appropriate authorized signatory (President, Provost or Vice President) for final approval.
   a. Department needs to retain the proof of service document

2. After acquired approvals are received, the original approved Cell Phone Stipend Request Form is returned to the Department’s Business Office.

3. The Department’s Business Office will enter the approved biweekly stipend into the URI biweekly payroll system for active URI full time state employees. See Cell Phone Stipend Procedures for PS.

4. The original approved Cell Phone Stipend Request Form is sent to URI Human Resources and copies to Controller’s Office and Payroll Office, Department and employee.

Changes or Discontinuing Stipend

The Employee’s supervisor is responsible for an annual review of the business need for a cell phone stipend to determine if the stipend should be changed or discontinued. If a University decision is made which results in changing or discontinuing the cell phone stipend during the year or if the employee is terminated, the employee is responsible for the cost of the cell phone plan, including cancellation/termination fees.

Security of Mobile Devices

While handheld devices provide many productivity benefits, they also pose risks to the University’s computing environment. Over time, significant amount of sensitive organization and personal information can accumulate on a handheld device. For example, email on a mobile device may discuss sensitive information protected by FERPA or HIPAA, or personnel or litigation issues. Information such as calendar and contact entries, passwords for online accounts, electronic documents, and audio and video media are also potential items of interest to an attacker. In addition, remote resources directly accessible by a device through its wireless or wired communications capabilities may also form a potential target for attackers. This includes internet access, voice mail and email repositories. It is the responsibility of the employee to immediately notify URI information Security of suspicious activity on his/her cell phone or if the phone has been lost or stolen.