

02.10.2025

Update to Employee Handbook

Policy 301 (1)

## **1. Personal cell phone use at work**

OMI recognizes that cell phones are a part of everyday life, and that employees bring personal phones with them while at work. The purpose of this policy is to form a work environment that is safe, productive, and free of distractions.

It is the Organization's expectation that all personal cell phones are on silent mode during the shift to maintain normal workflow and to not disturb the home life of the individuals we serve. It is expected that employees limit personal use (i.e. check it and put it away again). Personal calls and texting should primarily be done during established breaks. An established break is in accordance with the Break and Meal Period policies, 202 and 203, and has been communicated with other staff so that they know the employee is on break.

When using personal cell phones intermittently, employees should do so at an appropriate time as to not disturb the functioning of the home, and not interfere with job duties. Do not use a phone while providing personal cares. Distance should be made between co-workers and individuals we serve so that others do not hear personal conversations. Supervision of the individuals we serve must be maintained. Attention to surroundings must be maintained.

Cell phones are not to be used to record or photograph any individuals served, or any confidential or private information. OMI is not responsible for damage to personal cell phones. It is expected that staff keep personal cell phones securely stored. This might mean placing in the locked office, put in a pocket that has a zipper, or in clothing with a deep enough pocket so that the phone will not fall out when doing personal cares or dealing with an interfering behavior.

Use of ear buds is discouraged, but it is accepted to use one ear bud while the other ear remains open for hearing and attention to surroundings.

The use of cell phones while driving is prohibited except for voice prompts from a map. In accordance with the MN Hands Free Law, map directions must be set prior to moving the vehicle, and if adjustments need to be made it is expected that the driver pull over and stop in a safe location.

When not on an established break, unacceptable use of personal cell phones includes and is not limited to; watching a movie on the phone, playing games, engaging in social media,

continuously answering calls and texts that are not urgent, frequently going away (i.e. bathroom, outside, another room of the house) and co-workers do not know where the other staff is, using the cell phone at organizational events and out in the community with individuals, and/or being fully engaged on the phone while ignoring individuals served and co-workers.

Excessive use of a personal cell phone during work hours may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.