

## Consumer Management Series – Cell Phone Usage

Welcome to the age of instant data connections...where no person is ever without a cell phone and a cell phone is no longer just a phone – It's a camera, it's text messaging, it's internet connection, it's a GPS, it's a lifeline to the outside world! It's our ability to stay connected every second of every day.

If you have workers who have an addiction to their cell phones, that is not surprising! There are many who have not mastered proper cell phone etiquette, (i.e. leaving phones turned on high volume when they should be shut off, interrupting important situations to take a call or just being rude and answering a call in the middle of something like work!) and even more who know nothing about cell phone etiquette.

Asking a worker to not bring their cell phone to work is impossible. A few helpful ideas when it comes to reigning in cell phone usage during work:

- **Have a conversation with your worker about the importance of cell phone etiquette.**

Many times we think that someone knows (or should know) how we feel about a topic – cell phone usage while working, for instance – but if the worker has no idea how it is affecting you, because you have not mentioned anything, don't expect they can read your mind or mood. To them, using their cell phone all the time is just normal, but to you, it is irritating. Have a conversation with your worker. Speak to them in a calm, effective, meaningful way so that they will understand how using their cell phone while working affects you.

- *Telling someone to stop doing something is okay and can work in certain situations.*

Sarah, I want you to stop using your cell phone while you are working for me.

- *Asking someone to stop doing something and explaining why you would like them to do that action is much more effective because it gives reason to your request.*

Sarah, I am hoping we can talk about your cell phone usage while working for me. I know it's important to be able to communicate with your friends, and I'm happy that you have friends who reach out to you all the time. For me, it's becoming too much of an interruption while you are working and I see that you aren't as focused as you once were and things are being missed. I value your experience and great work ethic and I would hate for your cell phone usage to diminish that. Sarah, can we work together to limit your cell phone usage while you work so that you can focus to your responsibilities?

Follow through with what actions you can both take to resolve the situation.

- **Have a written cell phone policy/etiquette posted in a visible area** (*see example on page 2*) – Post in an area where your worker goes when they first come in, like where they sign their timesheets, or put their purse or coats. Note: This policy should include that your worker can check their phone for messages only during their break (and if they don't normally get a break, consider giving them a quick 5 minute break during their scheduled time so they can check their phone).
- **Have a cell phone drop off area:** A basket/container with a sign that reads: "Please place cell phone "In SILENT Mode" in this basket while on the clock." Again, this should be in a visible spot, maybe next to the timesheets, so when your worker comes in, they sign in and put their phone in the basket. When they take a cell phone break, they can check for/respond to messages and then put the phone back in the basket when that break is done. When they leave, they take their phone after they sign out.

## **CELL PHONE ETIQUETTE WHILE WORKING**

1. Before signing in, please turn your cell phone volume off or to vibrate.
2. If you forget to turn your cell phone volume off or to vibrate and your cell phone starts ringing during your work schedule, and you are not expecting an urgent call, please go to your phone and turn the volume off. Do not pick up a call or respond to a message while you are working.
3. Do not keep your cell phone on you while working. Place your cell phone in your purse, bag or coat pocket. If you do not have a purse, bag or coat pocket, you may place your cell phone \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If you are expecting a very important call during your work schedule, please notify me prior to your shift so we can discuss how we can best suit your needs.
5. You can check your cell phone and return messages during your break (if you do not normally get a break, halfway through your work schedule you will be allowed time to check your phone and return messages).

REMEMBER, CELL PHONE ETIQUETTE IS ABOUT RESPECT, GOOD MANNERS AND A PROPER WORK ETHIC. I AM NOT UNCARING OR UNKIND TO YOUR NEEDS. I AM HOPING YOU WILL AFFORD ME THE SAME SO THAT WE CAN HAVE A GREAT WORKING RELATIONSHIP. THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER.