

The effective^{HRM} Guide to Managing Mobile Phone use at work



If your business doesn't have a mobile phone use policy, this guide will explain why you need one and what it needs to include.

According to a recent survey, the average person scrolls 108 minutes a day and 88 miles a year.

And at that speed, you'd be able to 'climb' Mount Everest in 22 days, or complete the London Marathon in 108 days. Which is crazy. Isn't it?!

When your whole life is practically in your phone, it's so easy to be distracted by it throughout the day. And this can really affect your focus and productivity - both in your personal life and at work.

As an employer, this is your main concern.

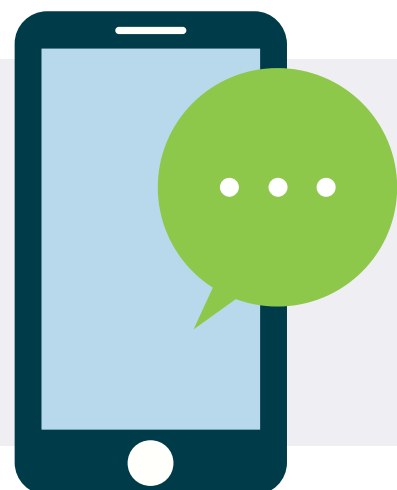


This is tricky. Especially when a lot of employees use their phone for both personal and work. And with the increase in remote and hybrid working, it can be incredibly difficult to manage this as there are so many blurred lines.

That's why we've created this guide for you.

Firstly, to explain the importance of having a mobile phone use policy and what it needs to include.

How can you encourage your staff to spend less time on their phones and more time doing the work you're paying them for?



How strict will you be?

Firstly, how strict is your mobile phone use policy going to be?



This will often depend on the type of work your employees do. Drivers, for example, would need a stricter policy than an office worker might.

A strict policy may say that phones must be switched off during work hours, or that they must be left in a locker or a desk drawer. Failure to comply would result in disciplinary action.

A more flexible policy may state that phones should be switched to silent during work hours, that essential calls must be taken away from the desk, and that phones should not be used during meetings.

You must remind staff that breaks are the time to handle personal emails, text messages, calls, and anything else.

Risks of mobile phone use

Before you begin writing your policy, it's a good idea to carry out a full risk assessment of your business.

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There may be roles within the company where a smartphone could be hazardous. For example, if you have drivers, people operating heavy machinery, electrical equipment that may be disrupted (in a medical setting for instance), or even somewhere where a distraction could cause danger.

In such cases, outline the specific roles that have a stricter usage policy and make clear the repercussion for breaching the policy.



In what instances may mobile phone use be acceptable?



Think about situations where the use of a personal mobile phone may be acceptable and include these in your policy.

As an example, making or receiving an emergency call or text might be ok. An employee may have a sick relative or a partner due to go into labour, for instance, and, in such cases, you may agree that calls can be taken at your employee's desk.

Smartphones may also prove useful if your employees wish to add a work meeting or event to their personal calendars, or create reminders for themselves, or even simply use their calculator to help them do their job.

If your policy is on the stricter side, would you make exceptions for this type of use or would you expect your people to find alternative ways of doing things?

Some businesses also allow employees to listen to music using headphones while they work. Would you allow your people to use their mobile phones to play music during their working day? This needs to go into your policy too.



Social Media

Social media and mobile phones can be a tricky one to navigate.

You may decide to put a ban on social media use during work time, and that's ok. But consider employees that may use social media as part of their role. Employees may need to use their phones to capture images for your social media feeds or even post updates. This exception should be covered in your policy too, to avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

If you don't decide to place a ban on social media during working hours, you should include what you deem to be acceptable use, and what action may be taken if this is abused.



Company-issued phones

Include a section on company-issued mobile phones if you have them.

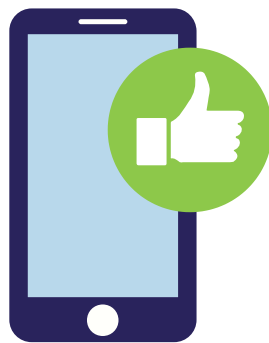
It should explain that the device is company property, as well as what is considered to be acceptable use of the phone. As an example, should your employees avoid making personal calls on the company device, or will they be required to cover the cost of non-work related calls?

Or perhaps you want to make sure that certain apps aren't downloaded onto the device for security purposes, or to include that no other person is allowed access to the device.

Include it all in your policy, so that everything is clear and there is no confusion should an issue arise.

Got it all covered?

When you think you've got everything covered, take a moment to reassess your stance on mobile phone usage.



While it's a great idea to have a firm position on how your employees use their personal phones in work time, it's always good idea to be as flexible as you can.

Especially if yours is a business that relies on flexibility from your people too.

Give and take is always a better motivator for employees and is much better for retaining your best people, and maintaining a motivated, productive workforce.



Be fair and consistent in everything you do, and ensure that there is no room for anyone to feel as though another member of the team is getting away with breaking the policy.

It can be difficult to decide on the most suitable mobile phone use policy for your business, and it may be something that you feel you would like to alter over time. As long as you update your policy and keep your staff informed of any changes, that's ok.



If you'd like a hand getting it right from the beginning, feel **FREE** to give us a call to see how we can help.

NEED SOME EXPERT HR ADVICE?

Simply contact our team on 03300 414589 or email
us at hello@effective-hrm.co.uk