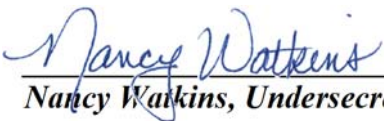


**PPM #53**

**Policy Name:** *Mi-Fi Approval and Appropriate Use*  
**Effective Date:** *February 1, 2019*  
**Revision Date:**

**Authorization:**   
*Nancy Watkins, Undersecretary*

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Office of Lieutenant Governor (OLG) and the Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism (DCRT) to provide Verizon Mi-Fi devices with Verizon data plans to employees that need them to conduct the state's business.

**DEFINITIONS:**

The term Mi-Fi describes a wireless router that acts as a mobile Wi-Fi hotspot via cellular internet. The Department's Mi-Fi devices connected through Verizon's cellular network. Mi-Fi routers provide Internet access for up to ten devices with varying download speeds that depend on the quality and speed of available Verizon cellular service.

**PURPOSE:**

This policy establishes detailed guidelines for determining which employees qualify for a State-owned Mi-Fi device. It explains restrictions on how the device and associated limited data plans may be used. It describes optional add-on services like international calling that may be added provided permission is granted by the Deputy Secretary or Undersecretary.

**APPLICABILITY:**

This policy applies to all offices within the OLG and DCRT.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

Eligibility for the stipend must meet one or more of several criteria: 1) protection of life and property, specific officials with responsibility for statewide Emergency Support Function 2 (ESF-2), Communications<sup>1</sup>. 2) IT, Parks Reservation Center personnel and others that provide sanctioned On-Call technical support in the evenings and weekends. 3) Improved efficiency and effectiveness of key

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism has been identified by GOHSEP as a secondary support agency for ESF-2 Electronic Communications, Infrastructure Systems, and Warnings. GOHSEP views Welcome Centers and State Parks with wired and wireless data circuits as valuable, dispersed emergency communication sites for coordinating evacuations and subsequent mitigation of disaster sites.

executive and functional staff. 4) Staff whose job duties include significant travel within the state, U.S. and internationally where secure Wi-Fi service is unavailable.

## **JOB REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING STATE OWNED MI-FI DEVICES**

Justification criteria for a Mi-Fi and cellular data service include protection of life and property, on-call, improved efficiency and effectiveness, and lack of internet access alternatives. The criteria are explained below.

1. **Protection of life and property** - the job duties of the individual require the performance of duties that could impact the protection of life and property. These duties may be impeded without immediate access to the Internet for email and web access regardless of location
  - Emergency Support Function 2: Communications – the job duties of staff with ESF-2 responsibilities for maintaining and managing alternative communication over the welcome center and state park wired and wireless data circuits.
  - Public Safety and Welfare - the daily job duties of the individual require the performance of activities that may directly impact the health, safety, security, and welfare of the general public. Such employees are designated as first responders to emergencies.
2. **On-call** – Staff whose job duties include formal, on-call technical responsibilities who must work outside of scheduled or normal working hours during evenings and weekends must have immediate internet access regardless of location.
  - On-call technical support personnel that require internet access so they may respond immediately to emailed requests for technical support with technology that generates income including point of sale systems, State Park reservation systems, State Museum ticketing systems, statewide electronic fiscal systems, venues, and related systems after work hours in the evenings and on weekends.
  - On-call technicians that must have internet access for remote access to OLG/DCRT user's laptops, network components, data center servers and related computing resources for troubleshooting, reconfiguration, and repair.
  - On-call staff needs internet access when and wherever they are so they may respond quickly to emailed requests for technical assistance from the Lieutenant Governor, his immediate executive staff and the executive staff of the Department.
3. **Improved efficiency and effectiveness** - the job duties of the individual require immediate access to alternative communication options for email and the Web during hurricanes and other disasters or major disruptions for strategic coordination, plenary, consultation, decision making and/or information access. Lack of instantaneous internet access could have a significant effect on the operational efficiency of the agency or a significant impact on the economic or political welfare of the state.

- Mobile or in transit - duties require that the individual check email, access cloud or state electronic system services while mobile, in transit or at a location in the State, U.S. or outside the U.S without secure access to Wi-Fi a large percentage of the business day.
  - Employees whose job function requires considerable time outside his/her assigned office or work area that are required to have internet access during those times.
- 4. Lack of suitable internet access alternatives** - no other suitable internet access options are available due to the location or environmental conditions of the workplace.
- Executive staff with OLG/DCRT that live where there's no suitable internet alternative or frequently travel to such a location may qualify for Mi-Fi if it's determined they must have 24-hour access to the internet for email and the web to conduct state business.
  - Department executives and staff that must travel nationally or internationally may be eligible for Mi-Fi so they can access the internet securely. Most locations that offer public Wi-Fi are not suitable internet access alternatives because they are easily hacked; public Wi-Fi is dangerous wifi that's not secure enough for placing a credit card purchase or reservation or even sending a mildly confidential email.
  - Department representatives that require fast, secure and reliable internet for presentations may qualify for Mi-Fi. They usually rely on slow, low quality public Wi-Fi for the internet portion of their presentations. That's insecure and may ruin their presentations when the public wifi flat lines. A Verizon Mi-Fi will significantly reduce risk and reliably provide a better signal in most venues than local public wifi made available for guests and speakers.

## **MI-FI DEVICE AND DATA SERVICE REQUEST JUSTIFICATION**

Employees apply for Mi-Fi devices and data service by completing a Mi-Fi Device and Cellular Data Service request form. Employees must provide thorough, written justification in support of their Mi-Fi request. The request must identify a permanent funding source for device acquisition, monthly service plan, and all related fees. The employee's supervisor, Assistant Secretary, and the Deputy Secretary or Undersecretary of the Department or his/her designee, must approve an employee's request for a Mi-Fi device and cellular data service. The same permissions must be obtained for add-on service like an international calling plan

Only a small number of Mi-Fi devices are available. Requestors must demonstrate a real need for Mi-Fi or their request will be turned down. Mi-Fi requestors already receiving cellular stipends for phone and data may be turned down if their provider, like Verizon, offers free mobile hotspot service and their work location receives adequate 4G cellular service.

## **MI-FI SUPPORT**

The Information Service Division (ISD) provides Mi-Fi support. I.S. staff orders Mi-Fi devices and alerts users when their devices are available for free upgrade. ISD orders and installs SIMM cards in new Mi-Fi devices and explains Verizon's state contract data plan to new users. ISD instructs new users how to use their Mi-Fi to connect to the internet. ISD explains the limits of the data plan by reference to activities

performed with the devices such as the number of hours of web browsing or the number of Emails that can be sent. The Verizon data plan on the effective date of this policy has a 25-gigabyte cap. That's enough for 1,250 hours of browsing, or 10,000 emails, or 160 hours of streaming music. Verizon does not charge overages when usage exceeds the cap. They simply slow the service down so web pages load very slowly.

ISD will instruct new Mi-Fi users how to perform a short list of required functions upon receipt of their Mi-Fi including how to:

1. turn the device on and off;
2. turn Wi-Fi signal on and off;
3. turn roaming on and off;
4. display and track data usage on the Mi-Fi;
5. connect their laptop or tablet to the internet over the Mi-Fi.

ISD provides new Mi-Fi users with a simple set of step by step instructions that illustrate how to complete the processes above.

#### **MI-FI RECIPIENTS RESPONSIBILITIES, OBLIGATIONS AND LIABILITIES**

Mi-Fi recipients are responsible for managing their own data usage so they do not exceed the 25 GB monthly provided by Verizon with the device. After recipients exceed 25 GB of data their access to data is throttled from 4G (6-8 Mbps) to 3G (850 kbps), a productivity-sapping speed reduction of 7X until the next monthly service period begins.

Mi-Fi recipients must follow the same Web usage guidelines they do on their work computers (PPM #7).

Mi-Fi recipients are responsible for their Mi-Fi device and shall pay the State for a replacement if they lose or damage one.

Mi-Fi recipients are responsible for paying any service charges that exceed the base cost of their data plan.

Mi-Fi recipients may use their State-provided devices and service on work-related international travel provided they:

1. Contact ISD staff, provide the dates and locations of work-related international travel so the appropriate international data service plan is obtained from Verizon.
2. Recipients must obtain written approval to use the device on work-related international travel from their supervisor, assistant secretary, and Undersecretary or Deputy Secretary or his/her designee. A request for such approval must include the cost of the international data service plan.
3. Provide ISD staff with a signed approval to use the device internationally and incur the cost of the international data service plan.
4. Receive confirmation from ISD staff that international voice and data service have been added to their service plan before traveling internationally.

5. Understand the limits of the international voice and data service plan so they do not exceed them and incur much higher overage charges. Usage may be checked and service stopped by employing the 4 processes identified above.
6. International travelers that exceed the limits of their plan agree to pay any and all overage charges, which can run into thousands of dollars. They agree to pay all overages whether accumulated through intentional use or from unintentional app chatter resulting from carelessly leaving the device on.