



State Auditor Report Shows MDOT Excels in Cell Phone Management

The Mississippi State Auditor found the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) to have the best managed cell phone plan of any state agency or university.

JACKSON, MS ([PRWEB](#)) October 23, 2004 -- According to the State Auditor's Review of State Agency and University Cell Phone Use, released Oct. 15, the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) has been shown to have one of the most well-controlled cell phone management and use plan of any state agency or university.

Today, MDOT employees—many of whom are on call 24 hours a day—use 683 cell phones to communicate while on the job. Every single bill is scrutinized each month for errors, over billing, excessive calls, utilization rates, credits, and bleed over—which occurs when a cell phone is frequently bounced to an out-of-area tower even though the user is inside a covered area.

“We (MDOT) have over 3,200 employees, and many of them work in the field,” MDOT Executive Director Larry L. “Butch” Brown explained. “Cell phones are a vital communication tool, but like anything else, we have to make sure that the cell phone management plan is effective and efficient and accountability measures are in place. The State Auditor's report proves that it is—and we're proud of that.”

MDOT does not have a large staff dedicated to cell phone management. Instead, the agency has a cell phone coordinator position with support from a few other employees. Before an employee is issued a phone, a request must be submitted to upper level management for approval. The request must include the employee's name, job description and a justification of cell phone need. The employee's cell phone plan is determined by their primary location within the state. Most MDOT employees do not travel outside of the state, and their calling plans reflect that. If an employee only needs a phone occasionally, they may be issued a phone from a pool designed for temporary use.

“A review of MDOT's cell phone policies and procedures revealed good management techniques that all state agencies issuing cell phones should emulate,” State Auditor Phil Bryant said. “Their management allows them to have as many as three times more phones being used as other agencies yet with only half the cost.”

Each employee must certify their understanding of the MDOT cell phone use policies and procedures in writing before being issued their phones. In addition to the cell phone management staff, each employee has the responsibility of reviewing and certifying their phone bill each month. Should the bill show excessive use or other similar issues, MDOT provides the name of the employee, the number of excessive minutes or other problem, and requests an explanation from the employee's supervisor.

According to the report, MDOT constantly monitors its employee needs, what plans are available, and plan costs to make sure it has both the best fit and the best process. MDOT switches to different plans as their needs dictate and as those plans become available. MDOT also uses “standard” phones as another cost saving measure. These actions result in an annual cost that is less than some other agencies and universities spend on half or fewer phones.



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