



# St. Helena Parish Hospital

*“Louisiana’s First Critical Access Hospital”*

Current Status: Active	Policy # HR.525.000
Effective Date: 6/26/2018	Revision Date(s):
Policy Area: Human Resources	Applicability: ALL ENTITIES
<b>USE OF CELLULAR PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES</b>	
<b>4 PAGE(S)</b>	

## **PURPOSE:**

It is the desire and intent of St. Helena parish hospital to provide guidelines in an effort to maintain a safe environment for patients, visitors, and employees by minimizing unnecessary distractions and decreasing the transmission of health care associated infections.

## **POLICY:**

It is the policy of the St. Helena Parish Hospital to eliminate the use of personal cell phones and other personal electronic devices during work time. This policy is meant to ensure that the use of these devices will not disrupt hospital operations and supports patient/employee safety. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices should never be used in any way that would distract from patient care or customer service.

This policy applies to any personal electronic device that makes or receives phone calls, leaves messages, texts messages, accesses the Internet or allows for the reading of and responding to email.

This statement of policy applies to all SHPH departments and facilities and any person who provides patient care within SHPH or any of its facilities.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

SHPH- St. Helena Parish Hospital

Cell phone/cellular phone or personal electronic device- includes mobile phones, iPhones, iPads, Smartphones or similar multi-application communication devices (with and without photography capability) that allows for telecommunication or any manner of electronic communication and image or audio recording.

Non-public areas at SHPH- Areas where patients, visitors and other guests are not usually present. Examples include a break room or an employee lounge.

Public areas at SHPH- Areas where patients, visitors and other guests may be present. Examples include the main lobby and sitting area, any waiting room, any nurse’s station, hallways, and “on-stage work areas” where attention to patients, visitors and guests is needed. (These are examples – other areas may also be considered a public area based upon the intent of this definition and policy.)

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## **GUIDELINES:**

1. Personal cell phones and other personal electronic devices must be in the silent or vibration mode at all times (in all patient care areas and while interacting with patients and visitors).
2. Cell phone use at SHPH will be for work-related activities only. Employees are not permitted to use any cell phones (personal cell phones or those provided by SHPH) while providing direct patient care or any healthcare services, and this includes the use of these devices for conversation/verbal communication as well as text messaging. Employees are encouraged not to use cell phones in public areas at SHPH or in front of patients, visitors and guests.
3. Orders, Consult Requests and Critical Values/Information- Orders, consult requests and critical values and/or critical information require personal voice conversation to limit miscommunication. Information that needs to be communicated immediately should not be texted or left on voicemail.
4. SHPH does not permit the use of personal cell phone cameras in the workplace for the delivery of patient care and related services, employee use of a cell phone or other digital electronic device camera may never be used for patient photography. Personal cell phone cameras may be used to take pictures during an employee celebration or department event in a non-public area of SHPH only.
5. Any employee who uses a personal cell phone camera to photograph a co-worker without his/her consent, a patient, physical hospital facilities or any aspect of Hospital business without authorization is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
6. To the extent any photographs taken by an employee or other provider with a personal cell phone result directly or indirectly in a breach of unsecured protected health information, the individual may also be subject to civil and criminal penalties under the law.
7. Unless provided and/or approved by SHPH, the use of any audio or video recording devices in the workplace is not permitted.
8. Any employee who uses a device without prior authorization by SHPH to record audio or video content such as conversations with patients and others while conducting Hospital business, is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
9. To the extent conversations or video recorded by an employee or other provider without authorization by SHPH result, directly or indirectly, in a breach of unsecured protected health information, the individual may also be subject to civil and criminal penalties under the law.

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10. While at work, employees are expected to exercise the same discretion with the use of personal communication devices as is expected with the use of any business phone. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of phone used, can interfere with medical equipment, employee productivity and be distracting to others. Flexibility will be provided in circumstances demanding immediate attention.
11. Cell phones may be used for personal business during break time and meal periods only in non-public and non-patient care areas (including break rooms, the cafeteria and outside of the building) to limit disruption and protect patient privacy and confidentiality. Employees may use cell phones in the SHPH cafeteria during a break or lunch period; however, the calls must not be conducted via speaker phone and may not include the use of video, e.g., FaceTime. FaceTime, on a cell phone or other device is not permitted in any public area of SHPH.
12. In addition to telephone services, many cell phones or personal electronic device providers offer additional functions and/or services including, but not limited to text messaging, web browsing, digital photography, audio-visual, and television. Employees should not use any of these services except during break time and meal periods in non-public areas.
13. Cellular phones and other personal electronic devices may not be used in the hallways of the hospital. We must be available to patients, family members and others to offer assistance where needed and to walk individuals to their destination as appropriate.
14. Employees must avoid bringing personal devices into clinical workspaces altogether to reduce the transmission of detrimental bacterial agents and decrease the risk of hospital acquired infections. To protect patients, all employees working in healthcare environments need to be aware of the risk infections pose to vulnerable patients.
15. Hand Hygiene is a vital part of preventing infection in healthcare settings, therefore, employees should clean their hands following any contact with their personal electronic devices, especially before contact with vulnerable patients or clients.
16. Disinfecting of personal electronic devices:  
All employees working in patient care areas must take time at least once each day to disinfect their cell phones and personal electronic devices according to manufacturer recommendations.
17. Cellular phone etiquette- Cell phone calls during meetings are a distraction and interfere with productivity and is discourteous to others. A reasonable standard is to place phones on silent or vibrate mode during meetings and to excuse yourself to answer the phone outside the meeting room, this includes text messaging.

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18. Use of cell phones while driving on Hospital Business:
  - a) Any employee who uses a Hospital vehicle or drives a motor vehicle as part of his/her job function is not permitted to use a cell phone (hands-on or hands-free) or similar device while driving. This includes receiving or placing calls, text messaging, receiving or responding to email, checking for phone messages or other similar activity.
  - b) Employees are required to stop the vehicle in a safe location in order to use a cell phone or similar device.
  - c) Any employed who violates the use of cell phones while driving on hospital business policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
19. Employees are responsible for understanding and following all aspects of this policy and to inform family and friends of the policy.
20. Management staff is expected to serve as role models for proper compliance and to ensure that employees understand and follow the expectations related to cell phones and other personal electronic devices.
21. If any employee or other person has a question about compliance with the information in this policy/procedure, he/she is encouraged to speak with a Department Head, Director or any member of Senior Leadership before performing a questionable function.

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