

Satellite Phones Management and Checks PHC Remote Guideline

Target Audience	All Employees
Jurisdiction	Primary Health Care Remote CAHS; Primary Health Care Remote TEHS
Jurisdiction Exclusions	N/A
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Approval Authority	Chair Primary Health Care NT Wide Leaders Committee
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Purpose

To provide Primary Health Care remote staff with a guideline on the management and checks required for satellite phones held in remote health centres and/or vehicles.

Guideline

1. General Information

Satellite phones are provided to maintain communications during times of phone failure, activities away from the health centre and emergency situations. Satellite phones should *only be used* when a conventional phone or mobile phone service is unavailable.

The majority of satellite phones in Primary Health Care (PHC) Remote are assigned to health centres and either available as hand-held models or fitted into health centre vehicles with the relevant accessories. A limited number of portable loan satellite phones are also available for use as required.

Satellite phones must not be used for private purposes. PHC Remote staff should use satellite phones in accordance with the [PSEMA Employment Instruction Number 12 - Code of Conduct](#) (Section 15 Use of official facilities, equipment and resources) and in a manner that does not bring the NT Government into disrepute.

PHC Remote staff should be aware that all NT Government IT facilities may be monitored, including use of phones and faxes. This means that phone and fax accounts are monitored and Managers are able to request reports when usage is detected which deviates from the norm.

2. Definitions

Satellite Phone: is a type of mobile phone that connects to orbiting satellites instead of terrestrial mobile coverage. A satellite must be in range for satellite phone communication.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Primary Health Care Staff

- Be familiar with the operation of the satellite phone
- Ensure the use of satellite phones is for work activities
- Use and store the satellite phone in accordance with manufacturer recommendations
- Participate in Quality Assurance (QA) activities as delegated
- Report any faulty equipment to the Primary Health Care Manager

3.2 Primary Health Care Manager (PHCM)

- Ensure satellite phones are in working order and checked regularly
- Ensure QA checks are attended by assigning staff to the task
- Evaluate and take action to correct issues identified through QA activities
- Ensure completed Satellite Phone Quality Return Forms are placed into the QA Folder
- Report faults with equipment promptly and ensure timely repair / replacement
- Orientate new staff to the correct use of satellite phones
- Ensure instructions for use are located with the satellite phone and easily accessible
- Monitor use and location of hand held satellite phones
- Monitor use of satellite phones ensuring activities are for work purposes only
- Maintain a record of phone, pin and puck numbers for situations where mobile phones become locked (to obtain these numbers please contact the ICT Voice 899 92415)
- Ensure all staff are aware of the location and purpose of the QA Folder when orientated to the health centre

3.3 CA Fleet Officer / TE District Manager's Administration Officer / RMP Administration Officer

- Coordinate the repair and maintenance of satellite phones as appropriate
- Provide loan equipment / bookings as required
- Follow up reported faults in sat phones

3.4 District Manager (NT-wide)

- Support QA activities in health centres
- Follow up on QA reports / issues with PHCMs

3.5 Professional Practice Nurse (PPN)

- Ensure reminder e-mails re QA activities are distributed to health centres monthly
- Monitor return of the [Satellite Phone Quality Returns form](#)
- Maintain the Quality Assurance database
- Report QA issues as required to the relevant person, eg District Manager
- Provide reports on QA activities quarterly and as required, to District Managers and Management Teams

3.6 DoH Information & Communications Technology Infrastructure Branch

- Provide administrative services for purchase and repair of satellite phones and acquisition of services
- Facilitate access to loan satellite phones as appropriate (available from Telstra Business Centres)

4. Procedure

4.1 Use of Satellite Phones

Satellite phones are considered a necessary part of health centre emergency equipment and as such all health centre ambulances are fitted with a satellite phone, or staff have access to a hand-held satellite phone. Where other mobile services are not available or may not be reliable, health centres may also be issued with a mobile satellite phone as appropriate.

Satellite phones are often the only means of communication during cyclones or extended power outages in the Top End. It is important that staff check that their satellite phone is working and is fully charged when a cyclone watch is issued.

Consideration to take satellite phones when travelling long distances is highly recommended. Town-based staff in Central Australia travelling by road to remote locations should ensure the PHC pool vehicle or NT Fleet pool vehicle is fitted with a satellite phone or should arrange for the use of a PHC Remote loan hand held satellite phone.

Similarly town-based staff travelling by road in the Top End should carry a remote loan hand held satellite phone when travelling to areas without normal mobile phone coverage. These are available from the Rural Medical Practitioner (RMP) Logistics Coordinator.

Satellite phones fitted in vehicles should be operational and turned on during travel. This enables staff to be contacted while travelling should this be necessary.

Staff must only use a satellite phone when conventional phones or mobile services are unavailable. This includes emergency situations and for contacting relevant personnel, such as family, colleagues, or management to update travel itinerary. **Satellite phones must not be used for personal calls.**

Instructions for the use of the satellite phone should be kept with the phone with a list of emergency numbers. It is recommended that emergency phone numbers are programmed into the satellite phone.

4.2 Cost of Satellite Phones

Satellite phones cost approximately \$1300.00 to purchase with an additional cost of about \$1,400.00 for vehicle accessories. A plan must be selected on the Satellite Phone Application and this provides the corresponding cost for phone calls made over and above the cost of those included in the plan.

Note: in general the plan selected for PHC Remote Satellite phones is the \$25.00 per month plan with call charges at \$2.00 per minute.

The high cost of satellite phone calls requires staff to exercise discretion in their use.

4.3 Routine Checking of Equipment

All staff have an individual responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the location, use of the satellite phone, and are aware of limitations, such as restrictions in certain weather conditions, some geographical locations and may/may not be able to be used inside a building. All health centre staff should rotate the responsibility of checking satellite phones to ensure familiarity with the phone.

[Section 4.7](#) provides information on the [Satellite Phone Quality Returns](#) form which is required to be completed each month. Satellite phones in health centre vehicles should be checked and also recorded on the [Vehicles Quality Returns Form](#) each month. Hand-held satellite phones should also be checked at least monthly. In addition, in the Top End, satellite phones should be checked when a cyclone watch is declared.

When travelling to remote locations, regional PHC Remote staff based in Central Australia should check that the satellite phone either in the pool vehicle or loan item is fully functional. The [Vehicle Checklist PHC Remote CAHS Form](#) requires regional staff to record the presence of a fully functioning satellite phone in the vehicle prior to commencement of the travel. This will indicate to staff whether they may need to request a loan satellite phone for the trip.

4.4 Satellite Phone Batteries

In general satellite phone batteries provide up to 3.6 hours of talk time or 30 hours of standby time. Any battery that hasn't been used for a month or more (including a new battery) should be charged for about 3-4 hours before use. Staff should use the instruction booklet for directions re charging their satellite phone.

Satellite Phones fitted into health vehicles are automatically charged by the vehicle battery when the vehicle engine is running.

Hand-held satellite phones (not fitted into a vehicle) should be connected directly to a power source to charge the installed battery. Staff should check the battery metre to determine if the battery requires charging.

4.5 Reporting Faults

It is important that satellite phone faults are detected, reported promptly and corrected as soon as possible. Faults in satellite phones fitted in health vehicles should be reported to the CA PHC Fleet Officer / TE District Manager's Administration Officer.

Central Australia	Top End
<p>The CA PHC Fleet Officer will coordinate repair of vehicle satellite equipment in consultation with PHCMs for satellite phones fitted in health centre vehicles.</p> <p>Repair of vehicle satellite phone accessories should be arranged with a local provider.</p>	<p>The District Manager's Administration Officer will coordinate repair of satellite phone equipment in consultation with PHCMs.</p> <p>When the health vehicle is not able to be taken to Darwin for satellite phone accessories to be repaired, the PHCM should liaise with the Administration Officer for repairs to be completed locally.</p>
<p>The CA PHC Fleet Officer / TE Administration Officer should direct faults with the satellite phone itself to: <i>ICT Voice Officer, ICT Services, Construction House, 87 Mitchell St. Darwin, NT 0801</i></p>	

4.6 Purchase of Satellite Phones

The purchase of new or replacement satellite phones is administered by the DoH Information & Communications Technology Infrastructure Branch in Darwin. Staff requesting a new or replacement satellite phone should provide a business case justifying the purchase, complete a Satellite Phone Application Form and forward through line management to the [Delegated Officer](#) - General Manager for approval. If approved, the Application Form should be sent to the ICT Voice Officer on: e-mail: ICTVoice.ths@nt.gov.au

4.7 Quality Return – Satellite Phone

Quality Return Templates can be downloaded from the [Quality Assurance Forms webpage](#). At the beginning of each year the PPN will distribute e-mail notification to health centres regarding the release of the QA Returns for the current year. Similarly a reminder e-mail will be distributed monthly, providing links to the QA Returns on the Atlas website.

A [Satellite Phone Quality Returns](#) form is required each month to complete this quality activity. Where staff cannot readily perform the check as indicated, they have the responsibility to request help and learn the necessary skills.

The Satellite Phone Quality Returns form is to be completed at the end of the month in which it is due and sent to the regional PPN (scan and e-mail or fax) during the first week of the next month.

The health centre copy of the completed form is to be:

- marked as 'sent' (either with a 'faxed' stamp or hand written)
- filed in the QA folder
- removed and discarded from the QA folder at the end of the year

See [Quality Assurance - Overview](#) for further information.

Document Quality Assurance

	Method	Responsibility
Implementation	Document will be accessible via the Policy Guidelines Centre and Remote Health Atlas	Health Policy Guidelines Program Atlas Development Officer, Primary Health Care CAHS
Review	Document is to be reviewed within three years, or as changes in practice occur	Atlas Development Officer, Primary Health Care CAHS
Evaluation	Evaluation will be ongoing and informal, based on feedback.	Atlas Development Officer, Primary Health Care CAHS

Key Associated Documents

Forms	Satellite Phone Quality Returns template <i>Satellite Phone Application Form</i> - available via DoH intranet Document Library, under Documents by administrative service: Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Vehicles Quality Returns Form Vehicle Checklist PHC Remote CAHS Form
Key Legislation, By-Laws, Standards, Delegations, Aligned & Supporting Documents	Health Centre Phones and Faxes Quality Assurance - Overview Staff Travel - Safety Considerations Vehicles Quality Returns Employment Instruction Number 12 - Code of Conduct - Section 15 Use of Official Facilities, Equipment and Resources Department of Corporate Information Services Financial Delegations: Schedule 2 (Section 5. Information & Communication Technology (including Telephones) pp 10-12)
References	As above

Evidence Table

Reference	Method	Evidence level (I-V)	Summary of recommendation from this reference
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A