POLICY: Use of cellular phones, personal pagers, i-pods and other electronic devices within the facilities, is restricted. The use of tape recorders, camera phones and push-to-talk phones is prohibited.

PURPOSE: To be available for the needs of our patients and families at all times, to eliminate personal distractions, maintain the staff and patients’ right to privacy, and to avoid confidential information from being mishandled.

PROCEDURE: Personal Cellular Phones, Pagers and I-pods

1. While at work, employees are expected to exercise the same discretion as using personal cellular phones as is expected for the use of company phones. Excessive personal calls during the workday, regardless of the phone used, can interfere with medical equipment, employee productivity and be distracting to others. Employees are therefore asked to make any personal calls on non-work time and to ensure that family members and friends are aware of the hospital’s policy. Flexibility will be provided in circumstances demanding immediate attention.

Personal cell phones should be turned off during work hours and may be used on breaks and during meal periods only. This includes sending/receiving text messages. Personal calls and text messaging may only be done in non-work and non-patient care areas of the hospital (including break rooms, the cafeteria and outside of the building) to limit disruption and protect patient privacy and confidentiality. Phones, i-pods and other personal electronic equipment 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.

If anyone is required by law or any other regulatory agency to wear a pager, prior authorization from the department head is required before a personal pager is allowed into the building.
2. All personal cellular phone users are to power off when carried in patient care areas.

3. Patients visitors and vendors will be permitted to use cellular phones in public waiting areas only. Signage will be posted in all other areas restricting use.

**Camera Phones and Tape Recorders**
Orange Regional Medical Center prohibits use of camera phones, cameras or tape recorders in the workplace, as a preventative step necessary to secure patient and employee privacy and other business information. Using cell phones to take pictures in the medical center for whatever purpose is expressly forbidden and subject to disciplinary action.

**Hospital-provided Cellular Phones**
Employees whose job responsibilities include regular or occasional driving and who are issued a cell phone for business use are expected to refrain from the use of their phone while driving. Safety must come before all other concerns. Employees are strongly encouraged to pull off to the side of the road and safely stop the vehicle before placing or accepting a call. If acceptance of a call is unavoidable and pulling over is not an option, employees are expected to keep the call short, use hands-free options and keep their eyes on the road. Special care should be taken in situations where there is traffic, inclement weather or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area.

In situations where job responsibilities include regular driving and accepting of business calls, hands-free equipment will be provided to facilitate the provision of this policy.

Employees whose job responsibilities do not specifically include driving as an essential function, but who are issued a cell phone for business use, are also expected to abide by the provisions above. Under no circumstances are employees allowed to place themselves at risk to fulfill business needs.

Employees who are charged with traffic violations resulting from the use of their phone while driving, will be solely responsible for all liabilities resulting from such actions.

Employees in possession of company equipment such as cellular phones are expected to protect the equipment from loss, damage or theft. Upon resignation or termination of employment, or at any time upon request, the employee may be asked to produce the phone for return or inspection. Employees unable to present the phone in good working condition will be expected to bear the cost of a replacement.

**Cellular phone etiquette** – Cell phone calls during meetings are a distraction and interferes 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.

Violations of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination depending on the violation.

REFERENCES: ECRI 10/99, 11/01; HIPAA of 1996

CROSS REFERENCES: Telephone Use policy