



NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

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AO/BRH:pmw

TO: All Central and Regional Office Staff

FROM: Benny R. Henson *BRH*
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SUBJ: Telephone Usage

DATE: September 18, 1986

Enclosed is a copy of a recent article which appeared in a local newspaper. Similar articles have appeared in newspapers and other publications across the country during the past three months. As you may know, a crack-down on improper use of the government telephone system is in process. While we have not been notified of a pending audit on NCUA's usage, it is always a possibility. Accordingly, this is an opportune time to remind all staff of some of the "do's and don'ts" regarding telephone usage.

a. Calls of a personal nature from any telephone located in any Central, Regional, or Sub-office are improper. Only NCUA business calls should be made. This includes local as well as long distance calls.

b. When in travel status, only those calls necessary for NCUA business are claimable on your travel voucher. Calls home are not considered NCUA business.

c. All long distance calls should be made using the FTS lines, not commercial long distance lines. As you know FTS is accessed with the "8" prefix.

d. Calls made on FTS lines are billed to NCUA on a cost-per-minute basis just as long distance calls are billed to you on your home phone. The only difference is that NCUA receives the government discount accorded high-volume users.

e. There are no "free" calls on FTS. NCUA is billed for calls made 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Years ago calls made on the weekend or after 5 pm weekdays were not billed to the agency. That is no longer the case.

NCUA spends almost \$1,000,000 per year on agency telephones and usage. Let's all use common sense and restraint to conserve in this area.

Listen Up, Government Workers: You May Be Allowed 1 Phone Call...

U.S. Considers Easing Rules at Cost of \$100 Million a Year

By Judith Havemann
Washington Post Staff Writer

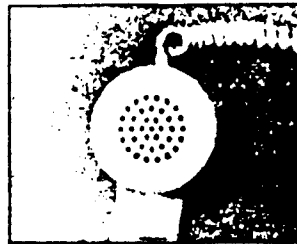
The government's prohibition on personal telephone calls may be modified to allow employees one call home when traveling in the United States on government business, under a proposal being considered by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency.

The new rule might cost as much as \$100 million a year, according to estimates prepared for the council, which is made up of departmental inspectors general, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The rules are also being reevaluated to determine whether all employees should be allowed to make emergency calls relating to illness, and to call home to say they are working late or to check on a babysitter or sick child, among other things.

The reappraisal of the rules coincides with a government survey of phone usage that showed that between 20 and 33 percent of long distance toll calls made by federal employees were for personal reasons.

"There is no question there is misuse right now," said Joseph R. Wright Jr., deputy director of the OMB and head of the council. "Now's the time to reduce the misuse, set a realistic policy, hold to it, and design a new telephone system for the business needs of government.... We think we might very



well get a reduction in what we're paying."

Present federal rules ban almost all personal telephone calls, including cases of emergency.

Preliminary surveys reported in June that between 29 and 50 percent of long distance phone calls made by federal employees at five agencies were for personal rather than business reasons.

The new, nearly government-wide figures are somewhat lower.

Almost 26 percent of commercial long distance calls were personal, and when the average is weighted by size of department, the figure goes down to 19.9 percent. About 22 percent of the time employees spent on the phone making commercial long distance calls were devoted to personal matters, according to the survey, which was made by calling the numbers to find out who answered.

About 33 percent of long distance calls made on the Federal Telecommunications System—which employees are directed always to use in preference to more expensive commercial lines—were personal, according to a weighted average.

The General Services Administration conducted the survey for the council, and expects to recommend changes in policies governing phone use in about two months. It is planning additional "management controls" to improve the enforcement of regulations.

Harry Newton, publisher of Teleconnect Magazine, a trade publication, said, "It is an unwritten rule in American business that people get to make one telephone call home when they are traveling on company business." Don Postma, director of news relations for General Motors Corp., said, "We encourage our employees to call home on a daily basis when they're on the road traveling. We consider it good employee relations."

GSA investigators, however, said they had been warned by some business leaders not to make such a generalization without conducting an extensive study.

The GSA obtained its \$100 million estimate of the cost by multiplying the number of travel days by a benchmark cost of \$1.35 per call. International travel was not included in the figure.

Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.), chairman of the House civil service subcommittee, said, "I don't think there is any way of knowing how much it would cost.... The cost may actually be less than we are spending already."

"I hope they will reclassify some calls so they are allowed," Schroeder said. "If a neighbor is calling to gossip, it's an outrage. If someone is checking on the car pool or babysitter, it is different."

DIALING FOR DOLLARS

What percentage of telephone calls made by U.S. government employees are for personal reasons? A government investigation revealed the number, time and cost of the personal calls made on Federal Telecommunications System (FTS) phone lines and on regular long-distance lines.

Agency	Calls (%)	Unofficial Use of FTS		Unofficial Use of Commercial Long-Distance		
		Minutes (%)	Cost (%)	Calls (%)	Minutes (%)	Cost (%)
Agriculture	30.5	26.5	23.6	10	3.3	2.3
Commerce	25.5	40.0	37.9	26	31.1	25.5
Interior	29.5	40.4	35.6	6	1.0	6
FBI	26.5	30.0	25.1	NA	NA	NA
Labor	45.5	15.1	44.8	40	49.3	40.2
Treasury	42.0	15.3	41.4	14	11.3	8.3
OPM	36.5	41.1	38.9	34	17.2	15.3
GSA	39.0	19.7	47.5	26	14.4	3.6
EPA	29.0	23.3	22.3	18	6.2	2.6
SBA	27.5	39.8	34.9	46	40.6	42.5
HHS	35.0	28.7	25.7	22	15.8	15.1
NASA	41.0	18.3	43.2	14	18.5	12.4
HUD	27.0	36.5	33.2	36	36.8	35.8
Education	28.5	41.0	36.8	44	28.6	25.3
Average*	33.6	36.4	33.3	19.9	15.8	11.0

*Weighted by size of department.