

# 1 **Personal Use and Misuse of University Property**

2 Effective: Moved to Policy Library from UPM 2.5(10)

3 Contact: [Senior Vice President for Business and Finance](#)

## 4 **Introduction**

5 This policy provides clarification regarding personal use and misuse of university property. State law,  
6 specifically Section 721.2 of the Iowa Code, prohibits any state employee from using, or permitting any  
7 other person to use, property owned by the state or any subdivision or agency of the state for any private  
8 purpose or for personal gain to the detriment of the state. Violation of this statute is a serious  
9 misdemeanor.

## 10 **Policy Statement**

11 This policy is intended to cover all types of university property and services, including cars, supplies,  
12 telephones, typewriters and computer hardware and software, equipment, campus mail, electronic mail  
13 and copying facilities, products from university farms, and food, drugs or chemicals available from  
14 university activities. No one shall be permitted to remove for personal use from the buildings or grounds  
15 any property belonging to the university, even though it may seem to be of no value. This includes use of  
16 university equipment such as farm machinery, trucks, or other equipment during off-hours when it is not  
17 needed for university operations. Telephone service and electronic mail is provided for the purpose of  
18 conducting university business.

19 Office, laboratories, work areas, files and materials (either in written or electronic form maintained or stored  
20 on university premises or in university computers or servers) may be entered, opened or reviewed without  
21 prior notice by authorized university personnel either as part of maintenance or servicing procedures, in  
22 order to conduct university business or when there is a question about the use or misuse of university  
23 property. It is expected that due care shall be taken of university property so that full expected use is  
24 obtained.

## 25 **Personal Use of Telephones**

26 Whether local or long distance, personal calls from university telephones must not adversely affect the  
27 performance of the employee or the organization and must be of reasonable duration and frequency. Local  
28 personal telephone calls without additional cost to the university may be made and received by employees  
29 on an incidental or emergency basis as long as they are not detrimental to the interests of the university.

30 Long distance calls include any calls that are not local or free of charge to the university. Personal long  
31 distance calls cannot be charged to university extensions, authorizations numbers, or credit cards.  
32 Charging personal long distance calls is strictly prohibited and may subject the faculty, staff or student  
33 employee to disciplinary action. Any personal long distance calls are to be made at employees' own  
34 expense; e.g., charged to personal calling or credit cards, use personal cell phone, use a pay phone, etc.  
35 Should a personal long distance call occur by accident or be necessary in the case of a personal

36 emergency, the employee must notify their supervisor of the occurrence and promptly reimburse the  
37 expense by personal check.

38 Departmental offices should review monthly long distance bills for all departmental staff and take  
39 appropriate action if unauthorized use of university telephones occurs.

## 40 **University Computers and E-mail**

41 Personal use of university computers and electronic mail should be restricted to incidental and emergency  
42 use. With the increasing use of electronic communications, staff members should keep in mind that these  
43 messages and materials may be accessed as public records if located in university facilities or equipment.  
44 In a number of cases, electronic messages written with the intent to be humorous, as well as personal or a  
45 private conversations, have become public, leading to subsequent disciplinary action and causing  
46 embarrassment to the individuals and the organization. All communication should be done in a  
47 professional and non-discriminatory fashion.

48 The Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources policy provides additional guidance on the  
49 ethical and acceptable use of information systems at Iowa State University.

## 50 **Other University Property**

51 Departmental offices should review operating procedures and remind staff that university facilities are not  
52 to be used for personal activities. Departmental offices are also responsible for strict supervision of stamps  
53 and other office supplies. Office supplies and stamps purchased with university funds are for use for  
54 university purposes only, and are not for resale or for use for private purposes. The proper use of  
55 university property should be the subject of careful judgment.

## 56 **Resources**

### 57 **Links**

- 58 • [Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources](#)
- 59 • [Exchange Email Best Practices](#)
- 60 • [Communication Technology Allowance and Reimbursement Procedures \[PDF\]](#)
- 61 • [Iowa Code Section 721.2](#)
- 62 • [Restrictions on Non-Travel Reimbursements \(e.g., home office expenses\)](#)