

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

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

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4 Contact: [Senior Vice President for University Services](#)

5 **Introduction**

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

11 **Policy Statement**

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

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

26 **Personal Use of Telephones**

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

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

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

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43 **University Computers and E-mail**

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

51 The acceptable use of information technology resources policy provides additional guidance on the
52 ethical and acceptable use of information systems at Iowa State University.

53 **Other University Property**

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

59 **Resources**

60 **Links**

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

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