

Chapter 39. Wireless Communications Policy¹

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Subchapter A. General Provisions

39.001 Purpose

- (a) The purposes of this chapter are to provide guidelines for the following:

¹ Chapter 39 was replaced by Travis County Commissioners Court on February 20, 2015, Item 16.

- (1) To implement the use of the most appropriate type of Wireless Communications Technology to perform the County functions,
 - (2) To acquire these Wireless Communications Technologies for County departments in the most cost effective manner taking into consideration both the costs of equipment and services and the administrative costs associated with maintaining them, and
 - (3) To maximize the useful life of County's inventory of County owned Wireless Communications Technologies while keeping repair costs to a minimum.
- (b) This chapter is intended to provide minimum guidelines related to the proper use of Wireless Communications Technologies. However, Officials may develop additional, more restrictive, rules for their Offices or Departments.
- (c) This chapter is not intended to reduce the flexibility of any Office or Department to use various Wireless Communications Technologies to accomplish their departmental requirements.

39.002 Definitions

In this chapter

- (1) "Auditor" means the Travis County Auditor.
- (2) "Bundled Plan" means Cellular airtime accounts that may include a predetermined number of minutes, texts, or data for a set monthly service fee.
- (3) "Cellular Allowance" means the amount of money authorized by Commissioners Court annually during the Budget process and approved by the Official that is added to an employee's pay for the use of the employee's personal cellular telephone for the purpose of conducting County business. This amount is supplemental income, processed through the payroll system, included in the employee's gross income and subject to standard payroll withholding for federal taxation and retirement contributions.
- (4) "Commissioners Court" means Travis County Commissioners Court.
- (5) "County Cellular Service" includes the cellular telephone device, an AC charger, local airtime and possibly long distance airtime for cellular services and personal communications services but does not include ancillary equipment such as cigarette lighter adapters, carrying cases, or belt clips.
- (6) "EWCCB" means the Emergency & Wireless Communications Coordinating Board.
- (7) "Official" means one of the following:

- (A) The elected official who employs a person to whom wireless communications equipment is assigned or the authorized representative of that elected official,
 - (B) The Commissioners Court who employs a person to whom wireless communications equipment is assigned or the authorized representative of the Commissioners Court, or
 - (C) The appointed official who employs a person to whom wireless communications equipment is assigned or the authorized representative of that appointed official.
- (8) "Official Use" means County business which relates to the official duties of the employee or official.
- (9) "Personal Use" means any communications or use, which does not relate to the official duties of the employee or Official but does not include the following:
- (A) one very brief call to inform a family member for each event when the employee is required to work beyond scheduled work hours and is in an isolated location where other communications services are not available, or
 - (B) calls made in isolated incidences when there are important, urgent circumstances that cannot be dealt with by other forms of communications, such as cases of clearly life-threatening or safety related situations.
- (10) "WCC" means Wireless Communications Committee (formerly Radio Users' Committee)
- (11) "Wireless Communications Technologies" include at least two-way radios, cellular and personal communications services, message paging services, mobile data services, and wireless networks or services.

39.003 Safety

- (a) Employees shall use all Wireless Communications Technology, including a cellular telephone, in a safe manner. Unless an employee is a law enforcement officer or an emergency responder using the technology for a critical communication, employees shall not use Wireless Communications Technology while operating a vehicle. Employees should plan wireless communications to allow placement and completion of communication either before traveling or after, if possible.
- (b) Employees are responsible for using Wireless Communications Technologies in compliance with the manufacturer's guidelines for use and safety.

39.004 Public Information

- (a) Records related to calls made on County Wireless Communications Technologies, including cellular telephones, are public information. Information related to telephone numbers called, and the length, the time, and the date of call are ordinarily obtainable through requests made under the Texas Public Information Act except in narrowly defined circumstances. Records related to calls made on personal Wireless Communications Technologies, including cellular telephones, may be public information if these records are collected, maintained, or assembled for County business purposes.
- (b) Employees do not have a privacy interest in the use of County Wireless Communications Technologies, including cellular telephones or any records related to the use of these technologies. County may, at any time, review the use of the County Wireless Communications Technologies, logs of usage, invoices related to usage and similar materials.

39.005 Confidentiality and Security of Communications

- (a) Wireless Communication Technologies are not secure and can be monitored.
- (b) Although it is technically difficult, inadvertent monitoring of private cellular conversations is possible. Caution should be used whenever confidential or sensitive information must be discussed.
- (c) It is a crime for a third party to monitor cellular telephone conversations intentionally without the consent of one of the parties to the conversation.
- (d) A party to the conversation can legally monitor or record the conversation.

39.006 Authorized Usage

- (a) Officials should inform employees of appropriate use procedures for the County provided devices and service and that accounts resulting in overages will be monitored. Upon issuance of a new device and service, an Acknowledgement of Business Usage Form stating that the user understands that the devices are for business purposes only must be signed and returned to the providing department. Failure to correctly report and reimburse Personal Use (as defined in section 39.002 (i)) that results in overage expenses from the bundled plan, could result in criminal prosecution. The employee's designation of usage as Official Use is subject to investigation and audit at any time.
- (b) Employees shall use the most cost effective and appropriate communications methods available. When meeting in County facilities, employees should, in most cases, ask to use an available landline instead of using their County issued wireless device.

- (c) All County Wireless Communications Technologies are provided solely for the purpose of conducting County business as determined by the Official.
- (d) Employees shall not use County Wireless Communications Technologies, either equipment or services:
 - (1) At any time when the use would impede any County function or business,
 - (2) In connection with any business venture or in any manner that contributes to personal gain for anyone from off-duty employment unless authorized by the Official,
 - (3) In any manner prohibited by County policy, or
 - (4) In violation of applicable laws and regulations.
- (e) Employees shall not include access numbers for County wireless communications equipment (telephone numbers, pager numbers, etc.) on any business card, letterhead, advertisement, or similar material that is not provided or authorized by County.
- (f) Employees should not use any County Wireless Communications Technologies for Personal Use.
- (g) Employees shall reimburse Travis County for any use of County wireless communications equipment or services that is determined not to be Official Use that results in additional charges from the Bundled Plan.

39.007 Purchasing and Inventory Procedures

- (a) Officials shall determine which of their employees may be issued County wireless communications equipment and what type of equipment and level of service is appropriate.
- (b) The Purchasing Office shall not process any purchasing request for County wireless communications equipment without recommendations from the WCC and, if applicable, from the EWCCB.
- (c) The Purchasing Office shall not process a purchase order for airtime unless it has received the written WCC recommendation.
- (d) Each department shall keep an ongoing assignment inventory of the County wireless equipment resources under its control. This inventory shall be available for review by the Chair of WCC, the Purchasing Office, or the Auditor's Office during regular County working hours.

(39.008 - 39.010 reserved for expansion)

Subchapter B. Wireless Communications Committee

39.011 WCC and its Authority

- (a) The Commissioners Court formally appointed the Radio Users Committee (now called the Wireless Communications Committee) to advise the Commissioners Court and all County departments on all matters relating to radio frequency communications systems and devices. This includes budget issues, equipment and service contracts, maintenance agreements, and wireless communications planning. The WCC consists of one member from each of the following Travis County offices and departments:
- (1) Information Technology Services (Chairperson),
 - (2) Emergency Services (Vice-Chairperson),
 - (3) Facilities Management,
 - (4) Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement
 - (5) Sheriff's Office Corrections,
 - (6) Transportation and Natural Resources, and
 - (7) One representative from the five Constables as a group.
- (b) WCC shall provide a technical review of all wireless communications equipment before it is approved for purchase to ensure compatibility with available County resources, services and licenses.
- (c) WCC shall periodically review and monitor the utilization of cellular services.
- (d) WCC will notify the Purchasing Office, Planning and Budget Office, and Auditor's Office when reviewing issues related to purchasing, contracts, vendor performance, billing and payment to allow them to participate, if desired.

39.012 EWCCB and its Authority

- (a) The Commissioners Court in partnership with other elected public safety officials established the Emergency & Wireless Communications Coordinating Board (EWCCB) to coordinate, monitor, and oversee the performance of emergency communications programs.
- EWCCB is the primary group for contact, coordination, and development of emergency wireless communications programs with other agencies and jurisdictions as well as within Travis County government.
- EWCCB provides recommendations to the Commissioners Court on matters of emergency and Wireless Communications Technology.

EWCCB is composed of one member from each of the following Travis County offices and departments:

- (1) Sheriff's Office (Chairperson),
 - (2) Emergency Services (Vice-Chairperson),
 - (3) One representative for the five Constables as a group,
 - (4) Transportation and Natural Resources,
 - (5) Information Technology Services, and
 - (6) Emergency Services.
- (b) EWCCB shall review and, if appropriate, recommend any wireless communications systems that interface with the County's Emergency 9-1-1 services, or County operated Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPS) or that require new licensing.

(39.013 - 39.020 reserved for expansion)

Subchapter C. Use of Two-way Radio, Messaging Services, Mobile Data Services and Network Services

39.021 Two-way Radio

- (a) All use of County owned or operated two-way radio equipment shall comply with FCC regulations that govern the use of two-way radio communication.
- (b) Any use of two-way radios that is not authorized or is not in compliance with FCC regulations and any limits placed on the use of a license by the FCC could result in fines to the County or loss of the assigned license. An employee may be held liable for the fines and other damages incurred by Travis County as a result of any unauthorized use.
- (c) An employee may be subject to disciplinary action for use of two-way radios in violation of regulations or license restrictions.
- (d) Officials are responsible for ensuring that employees are trained in the proper use and etiquette for two-way radios.

39.022 Messaging Services (Paging)

- (a) Wireless messaging service charges shall be accounted for with the commitment item number assigned by the Auditor.
- (b) Each department shall pay for messaging services through issuance of a requisition (shopping cart) and purchase order against the County wireless messaging contract on the County financial and purchasing system.
- (c) Purchase orders may be issued at the beginning of the fiscal year for the entire year, or monthly for services to be provided in the upcoming month.

- (d) Upon receipt of each invoice, the department shall receive the airtime against the purchase order in the County financial and purchasing system and forward it to the Auditor for payment.

39.023 Mobile Data Services

- (a) All County owned and/or operated mobile data devices shall be used only in accordance with County data acquisition policies.
- (b) Because mobile data devices are used by County law enforcement, fire, and EMS units, Personal Use of these devices must follow personal use guidelines.

39.024 Wireless Networks

- (a) Travis County Information Technology Services (ITS) department provides several systems for wireless communications.
 - (1) Wi-Fi: 802.11x wireless communications provided by ITS are available in most county facilities. They are available as internal county network or public access.
 - (2) TRAVCO wireless network is a hidden internal county network that requires user name and password. Access to this network is restricted to county employees or other agencies or vendors who have properly documented the request and have been approved for the access.
 - (3) TC Guest Access is a public access network that allows access to the internet but not to the internal county network.
- (b) For access to the County Network from non-county networks, several methods of secure access are provided:
 - (1) CISCO VPN. VPN access is allowed with provided user groups and passwords for county employees and vendors who meet access criteria. Requires a client download and specific county profile.
 - (2) NetMotion. Provides secure access from public networks through a separate client. This connection is preferred when persistent connectivity is needed and is primarily used for the counties' public safety users.
 - (3) Desktop Direct. County users can use an application called Desktop Direct to operate a registered Travis County computer from a home or wireless device. All security required for normal operation must still be complied with when working remotely.
 - (4) Virtual Desktop. Testing. For future use.

(39.025 - 39.030 reserved for expansion)

Subchapter D. County Cellular Services and Cellular Allowances

39.031 Reimbursement of Use of Personal Cellular Device

The cost of use of a personal cellular device for county business is reimbursable at the discretion of the department.

- (1) When the appropriate certification forms have been completed by the employee and the department, and the use is approved by a department official;
- (2) If the user encounters an overage from the user's Bundled Plan as a result of conducting county business on their personal device, the user may be reimbursed for the cost of the overage(s).

39.032 Authorization of Cellular Allowance and County Cellular Service

- (a) Officials may request authority to provide either a Cellular Allowance or County Cellular Service for positions in which one or more of the following apply:
 - (1) The duties of the position:
 - (A) Involve frequent travel or routinely take the employee into the field or away from routine telephone and radio communications, and
 - (B) The employee must be contacted on a recurrent basis and respond in an expeditious time frame,
 - (2) The duties require the employee to be contacted and respond within a short time to provide directions or authorize action, or
 - (3) The employee must be contacted after normal business hours or on weekends and the employee will not have ready access to other means of communication.
- (b) Cellular Allowance. Authorizations for a Cellular Allowance and for County Cellular Service are tied to positions based on the duties of the position and paid to the employee in a position with the duties described in 39.032 (a). These authorizations do not automatically transfer from position to position as an employee changes positions. Each change requires a review of appropriate Wireless Communication Technologies for the new position based on the duties of the position.

39.033 General Responsibilities of Officials

- (a) Officials may establish "departmental" rules that are more restrictive than this chapter. The Official shall distribute any "departmental" rules related to his or her employees before the rules become effective.

- (b) The Official must maintain an accurate record of:
 - (1) Employees who receive Cellular Allowances and their cellular phone numbers, and
 - (2) Employees who have County Cellular Service and their cellular phone number.
- (c) The Official must periodically review the requirements of the functions of the positions authorized to receive Cellular Allowances and County Cellular Service to ensure that those positions have a continuing County business need for them at the level of service or allowance authorized.
- (d) An Official may begin or terminate a Cellular Allowance or County Cellular Service for a particular employee at any time. The Official must reduce or terminate the Cellular Allowances or County Cellular Service if there is no longer a County business purpose for providing the Cellular Allowance or County Cellular Service.
- (e) The Official must review requests for changes to Cellular Allowances and Cellular Phone Service from employees. An Official may decrease the level of a Cellular Allowance for a particular employee at any time. An Official may increase the level of the Cellular Allowance for a particular employee only once during a fiscal year.
- (f) The Official should convert positions from County Cellular Service to Cellular Allowance if County Cellular Service becomes less cost-effective than a Cellular Allowance. The Official must convert positions from Cellular Allowance to County Cellular Service if Cellular Allowance becomes less cost-effective than a County Cellular Service.
- (g) The Official must have an inventory of county provided devices and ensure that each employee has signed an Acknowledgement of Business Usage Form.

39.034 Implementation of a Cellular Allowance (Stipend)

- (a) There are two types of Cellular Allowance:
 - (1) A regular allowance is included in an employee's pay each pay period which may be at one of the following three levels which have been approved by Commissioners Court:
 - (A) Level A, \$10/month,
 - (B) Level B, \$20/month,
 - (C) Level C, \$30/month,
 - (2) A special allowance is paid on a single pay period as a result of a need for the service for a special event or occurrence to an employee who does not receive a regular allowance. The amount of the special allowance is determined by the amount approved by the Commissioners Court for that purpose during the budget process for

County needs that can be anticipated such as service for election judges on election days.

- (b) Before February 1 of each year, WCC reviews the rates previously approved for each of the types and three levels of Cellular Allowance and submits a recommendation to Commissioners Court for consideration.
- (c) A Cellular Allowance shall only be approved by an Official for a position in which the employee requires immediate contact for the execution of his or her duties and if the employee does not have County Cellular Service. Positions in which employees only need to be reached for routine messages shall use other wireless communications services. The Official determines whether a particular employee is provided a Cellular Allowance and the level of the Cellular Allowance provided to a particular employee.
- (d) An employee shall not be reimbursed for cellular expenses that exceed the Cellular Allowance.
- (e) Generally, Cellular Allowances are not prorated for employee leave during a pay period. The Official may cancel the Cellular Allowance during leave when the employee is expected to be on leave for an extended period such as Family or Medical Leave.
- (f) Initiation of and all changes to a Cellular Allowance for an employee are made using a procedure established by County Auditor. The Official is responsible for making requests for commencement and termination of a Cellular Allowance in compliance with these procedures.

39.035 Responsibilities of Official for Cellular Allowances

- (a) The Official determines which positions are eligible for a Cellular Allowance, based on the requirements of the job. The Official must determine the type and level of Cellular Allowance on a case by case basis taking into consideration the employee's position and its job functions, historical usage, and estimated required level of usage for County business.
- (b) The Official must periodically verify that employees receiving a Cellular Allowance are available by cellular phone during times required by the Official.
- (c) If the employee requests an increase in Cellular Allowance, the Official should review the amount of the employee's county business cellular phone usage to determine whether an increase is appropriate and may make increases that are within the Official's Cellular Allowance commitment item. If the requested change is not within the Official's Cellular Allowance commitment item, the Official may request changes to it as described in 39.032.
- (d) The Official may reassign Cellular Allowances approved in the department's budget among the employees in his or her office or department.

- (e) In exceptional circumstances when the Official requires an employee to use cellular equipment with specialized functionality, such as GPS, in the performance of his or her assignment and it is necessary for the employee to use the cellular services for Personal Use, the Official may issue the employee County cellular equipment without access to a county plan for the duration of the assignment and authorize the employee to receive a Cellular Allowance if the employee activates the county equipment in the employee's own name, is responsible for all costs of activation and operation of it, and all other requirements for receipt of a Cellular Allowance are complied with by the employee.

39.036 Responsibilities of Employee Receiving a Cellular Allowance

- (a) An employee in a position that is approved to receive a Cellular Allowance by the Official must do the following:
 - (1) Obtain cellular service through purchase of a cellular telephone no later than two weeks after the Cellular Allowance is first included in the employee's pay
 - (2) Maintain dependable and regular cellular service as long as the employee is receiving the Cellular Allowance
 - (3) Provide the Official and the employee's supervisor with the current cellular telephone number,
 - (4) Notify the Official and the employee's supervisor of any changes to the number or of any suspension or termination of cellular service,
 - (5) Maintain and repair the cellular telephone device as needed, and
 - (6) Replace the cellular telephone device if it is lost or damaged.
- (b) If an employee believes that the level of Cellular Allowance is not sufficient to meet the County business needs of the position on a regular basis, in January of any year, the employee may submit a request for an increase in the level of the Cellular Allowance to his or her supervisor. The request must include a description of the Official Use of the cellular phone, a telephone log of Official Use cellular phone calls for at least the last 6 months, and, if most calls are incoming calls, a description of the types of calls received by the employee, and the business purpose of these calls.

39.037 Implementation of County Cellular Service

- (a) County Cellular Service shall only be approved by Officials for employees who require immediate contact for the execution of their duties and who do not receive a Cellular Allowance. The Official determines whether a particular employee is provided a County Cellular Service and the amount of airtime and other services included in that County Cellular Service. Employees who only need to be reached for routine messages shall use other wireless

communications services. County Cellular Service should not be used when a less costly alternative is safe, convenient, and readily available.

- (b) County Cellular Service is obtained through County purchase of the device and airtime. Maintenance and replacement costs for cellular devices purchased by County are a County expense if the device is lost or damaged as part of the course and scope of the employee's duties.

39.038 Responsibilities of Official for County Cellular Service

- (a) The Official shall review all county bills for cellular services on a regular basis to ensure appropriate use. It is the responsibility of the Official to monitor all Personal Use and terminate County Cellular Service when abuse of the Personal Use guidelines is detected.
- (b) The Official must conduct analyses of monthly rate plans to determine if County Cellular Services are enrolled in appropriate rate plans and make changes as appropriate.
- (c) The Official must review requests for equipment, accessories, and repair service.
- (d) The Official must coordinate the approval process for changes in equipment within the office or department.
- (e) The Official must ensure that all payments are made from appropriate line items in the budget.
- (f) If an Official is authorized to provide County Cellular Service to an employee and the employee requests a Cellular Allowance instead, the Official should make the appropriate budget transfers and allow the employee to receive a Cellular Allowance at a level determined by the Official unless there is a compelling County business reason to deny the request.

39.039 Personal Use of County Cellular Service

- (a) Personal Use of County Cellular Service as defined in 39.002(i) is strongly discouraged because employees may receive a Cellular Allowance instead of being issued County Cellular Service if the employee prefers to have both Personal Use and Official Use on the same cellular service. County Cellular Service shall not be used for political gain; illegal, fraudulent or malicious activity; entertainment (including games, radio and video); religious promotion; or activity on behalf of organizations or individuals having no affiliation with Travis County.
- (b) If an employee abuses the use of County provided cellular service, the department management has the discretion to terminate the service, retrieve the device from the employee, and take other management action as deemed necessary.

39.040 Responsibilities of Employee with County Cellular Service

- (a) Each month the employee is responsible for ensuring that he or she does not exceed the level of County Cellular Service that has been authorized by the Official. The employee is responsible for ensuring that the amount of airtime and other services used in any month does not exceed the amount authorized for his or her use.

If an employee exceeds the level of County Cellular Service authorized by the Official, the Official may terminate the County Cellular Service for that employee, and, if appropriate, provide that employee with a Cellular Allowance and require that employee to comply with all of the responsibilities of an employee receiving a Cellular Allowance stated in 39.036.

- (b) The employee is responsible for repair and replacement costs if the cellular device is lost or damaged as part of an employee's personal activities or negligence by the employee.

39.041 Amount of Service and Airtime for County Cellular Service

- (a) Officials must determine the allowable amount of County Cellular Service, including the amount of airtime on a case by case basis taking into consideration the employee's position and historical usage.
- (b) For employees using Bundled Plans, Officials shall determine expected usage for cellular phones and attempt to purchase bundled minutes near the prediction. Then, periodically, the Official and employee or employee bundling group should check invoices to see if the Bundled Plan should be increased or decreased based on usage for that period.

39.042 Invoices and Billing of County Cellular Service

- (a) Charges for airtime, equipment, accessories, and repair services shall be paid from the appropriate commitment item assigned by the Auditor's office. County Cellular Service expenditures for airtime should be encumbered at the beginning of each fiscal year through the issuance of a requisition (shopping cart) and purchase order against the County cellular airtime contract(s) on the County financial and purchasing system. Annual airtime usage should not exceed the department's yearly budgeted amount.
- (b) Upon receipt of the invoice, the department is responsible for certifying that all use of the County Cellular Service is Official Use or any overages due to Personal Use have been reimbursed by the user during the invoiced period by completing the Departmental Airtime Certification Forms and Employee Cellular Airtime Certification when applicable. These forms are available from the Auditor.
- (c) The department shall follow the procedures established by the Auditor for the payment of cellular airtime invoices.

39.043 Reimbursement by Employee with County Cellular Service

- (a) If the monthly bill contains any overage costs for minutes, texts, or data the employee must reimburse the county for their personal calls, texts, or data at the rate charged for overage minutes, texts, or data and complete the Employee Cellular Reimbursement Form.
- (b) The department shall collect all reimbursements and submit them to the County Treasurer in compliance with procedures established by the Auditor. Reimbursements received from employees are credited to the department's County Cellular Service commitment item.
- (c) The department shall then complete the Departmental Cellular Airtime Certification Form and submit all documentation required by the Auditor for payment of the invoice.
- (d) The Auditor shall then process payment for the full amount of the invoice.

39.044 Business Use of Personal Equipment

- (a) While traveling, employees may be reimbursed for charges for airtime for using privately owned equipment in performing County business authorized by their Officials if the employee does not have County Cellular Service at the destination to which the employee is traveling and does not receive a Cell Phone Allowance.
- (b) While traveling out of state, employees who receive a Cellular Allowance may be reimbursed for charges for airtime for using privately owned equipment in performing County business authorized by their Officials if the employee does not have County Cellular Service at the destination to which the employee is traveling.
- (c) Travis County is not liable for any damage to personal equipment whether or not being used for County business.
- (d) Reimbursement shall be only for the amount of funds encumbered for an expense incurred to conduct County business. The employee includes the expense on the travel reimbursement form available from the Auditor's office to claim the reimbursement.

39.045 Forms

The following forms are used to justify, purchase, and account for wireless devices and ongoing expenses. The forms are available on the Travis Central (intranet) resource page.

- (1) Wireless Request Form. Used to request new wireless service/devices through the Wireless Communication Committee. Form must be completed, unless waived through the Blanket Approval for Cell and Smart Phones, prior to purchasing new devices or service.

- (2) Travis County Monthly Cellular Service Allowance. Used to request a stipend for a monthly reimbursement for personal cellular usage.
- (3) Blanket Approval for Cell and Smart Phones. Approval memo by the Wireless Communication Committee (Formerly Radio Users Committee) allowing al chairman to approve new cellular phone and accounts so all requests do not need complete Wireless Communications Committee approval.
- (4) Wireless Policy Acknowledgement of Business Usage Form. To be signed by wireless users acknowledging they understand the acceptable use guidelines.
- (5) Employee Reimbursement Request for Personal Wireless Usage. Used to request one time reimbursement for use of personal cellular service.
- (6) Employee Certification for County Issued Technology. Used to remit payment to the county for one time use of a county cellular device for personal use.