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1. INTRODUCTION
It has been revealed that telephone calls are one of the major expenses of the UMzimkhulu Municipality. This is mainly due to the high number of calls made, be they "private" or "official". This is notwithstanding the fact that Council is re-establishing itself and, as such, populating its organogram with new appointments. Council will at all times strive to keep telephone expenditure within limits, as well as to reduce low productivity resulting from private calls to a minimum.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy shall be as follows:

2.1 To ensure the effective and efficient use of Municipal telephones;

2.2 To curb the abuse of Municipal telephones by employees of the Council;

2.3 To reduce telephone costs;

2.4 To prevent the use of Municipal telephones by unauthorized persons;

2.5 To introduce corrective measures for officials who fail to observe the guidelines stipulated in the policy;

3. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy shall apply to all users of the Council telephone system, regardless of their designation.

4. PROVISION OF TELEPHONE SERVICE

4.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Council to provide all Municipal offices, or a combination of Municipal offices, with a satisfactory and reliable telephone service;

4.2 The Council may centralize its telephone operating system, and install one or more switchboards through which all incoming and outgoing calls shall be routed

4.3 The Municipal switchboard(s) shall be housed in a safe and secure environment and the switchboard instrument, as well as the office in which the switchboard is housed, shall be provided with a lockable device or devices, the keys of which shall be in the possession of the Switchboard Operator(s) appointed by the Council;
4.4 It shall be the responsibility of the Switchboard Operator(s) to ensure that no unauthorized person obtains access to the switchboard(s) of the Council.

5. TELEPHONE USAGE CONTROL MEASURES

5.1 The Council shall determine which employees may have direct telephone lines to their offices, for use in connection with the performance of their official duties;

5.2 It shall be at the discretion of the Council to provide an electronic device for the monitoring of all outgoing telephone calls;

5.3 Where the Council employs more than one Switchboard Operator, the Municipal Manager shall designate one Operator as the official responsible for monitoring telephone usage.

5.4 Staff members shall only be entitled to make international calls with the specific approval of the Municipal Manager;

5.5 No staff member shall make a call on behalf of, or allow any unauthorized person to make a private telephone call, from either a private telephone line or from the switchboard of the Council.

5.6 The Municipal Manager shall determine category of users according to levels of telephone usage, and shall allocate monthly budget according to each such category.

5.7 The MM shall assign each user to a category and any user who is not satisfied may request the MM to review his/her category.

5.8 A user shall not exceed the budget to which he/she is assigned and when such user reaches the budget allocated to him/her category, his/her telephone line shall be cut. A monthly budget shall not be accumulative.

5.9 The Municipal Manager shall review the categories and the assignment of users to such categories as and when he/she considers it necessary, but shall do so at least once in every calendar year.

5.10 Notwithstanding Clause 5.8, The Executive Manager of the user may allow a user to exceed his/her monthly budget if that user demonstrates that there are exceptional circumstances which justify the budget being exceeded by motivating through a memo specifying the reasons for requesting an increase.
5.11 Abuse of telephone shall be strictly disallowed and condemned at all times.

5.12 Employees must ensure that telephone lines and instruments allocated to them, are properly looked after and any noticeable fault must be reported to switchboard.

5.13 All employees when leaving an office must inform switchboard receptionist in order to re-direct incoming calls to a colleague in their cluster to answer.

5.14 All employees are expected to re-direct incoming calls incorrectly put through to them, to the relevant person or cluster.

5.15 Managers shall be responsible for the implementation and management of this policy.

5.16 Senior management must ensure that a generic KPI that addresses over expenditure on telephone costs is incorporated in their scorecards as well as their direct reports.

5.17 Monthly reports including misuse and over expenditure on telephone account by individual users, must be submitted to the Council.

5.18 The Municipal Manager shall request the respective Heads of Departments to account for telephone over-expenditure.

5.19 Departments that have over-spent on their telephone expenditure will have to account and explain to the Municipal Manager of their excessive expenditure on telephone costs, if so required.

5.20 Business and private calls must to be kept to minimum duration.

5.21 Fax lines must not be used for making calls.

5.22 In general, the duration of a single call should not be more than 5 Minutes.

5.23 Private calls shall not be allowed except during situations of emergency.

5.24 Each employee and Councillor shall pay for private calls made. The cost of private call shall be deducted from the salary or allowance of the person who made such a call.
6. TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

6.1 All employees must observe generally accepted telephone etiquette and must refrain from using obscene language.

6.2 Incoming calls must be handled with courtesy and should be directed to relevant people or department.

7. BARRING OF TELEPHONES

The Municipal Manager shall have the discretion to determine which staff members with direct dialing facilities shall be allowed to make international calls only, and telephone lines shall be suitably barred on the basis of this classification.

8. AVAILABILITY OF THIS POLICY

Every staff member, upon being appointed in the service of the Council, shall be supplied with a copy of this policy, and shall acknowledge receipt thereof by signing a duplicate copy thereof. The said duplicate copy shall be filed on the personal file of the staff member.

9. CONSEQUENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE

A failure to comply with the policy will be viewed as a serious disciplinary transgression, and appropriate disciplinary action could result from such action.

10. CONTROL PROCEDURES

The telephone system currently used should be monitored constantly for it to control over expenditure on telephone usage. The system must at all times detect any employee when they have reached their limits and freeze their pins for making outgoing calls.

11. TELEPHONE ACCOUNTS

11.1 The finance office will analyse all the monthly statements every month and include findings in all reports to councilors and issue them to the departments overspending to rectify reasons for such over expenditure.
12.  **COMMENCEMENT OF THE POLICY**

This Policy will come into effect on the date of adoption by Council.

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13.  **INTERPRETATION OF THIS POLICY**

13.1 All words contained in this policy shall have an ordinary meaning attached thereto, unless the definition or context indicates otherwise.

13.2 The dispute on interpretation of this policy shall be declared in writing by an party concerned.

13.3 The Office of the Municipal Manager shall give a final interpretation of this policy in case of written dispute.

13.4 If the party concerned is not satisfied with the interpretation, a dispute may then be pursued with the South African Local Government Bargaining Council.

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14.  **PERMANENT/TEMPORARY WAIVER OR SUSPENSION OF THIS POLICY**

This policy may be partly or wholly waived or suspended by the Municipal Council on temporary or permanent basis.

Notwithstanding clause No. 15.1 the Municipal Manager may under circumstances of emergency temporarily waive this policy subject to reporting of such waiver or suspension to Council.

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15.  **COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

Violation of or non-compliance with this policy will give a just cause for disciplinary steps to be taken.

It will be the responsibility of Council to enforce compliance with this policy.

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16.  **AMENDMENT AND/OR ABOLITION OF THIS POLICY**

This policy may be amended or repealed by Council as it may deem necessary.