

9 September 2020

C123415

s9(2)(a)

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Tēnā koe s9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 22 June 2020, requesting the current policy on prisoner phone calls. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). We apologise for the delay.

Public safety, reducing re-offending and enhancing wellbeing are the ultimate goals for Corrections. In accordance with the Corrections Act 2004, we make public safety paramount when managing offenders, and administer all sentences in a safe, secure, humane and effective manner. All prisons are operated in accordance with New Zealand legislation and having regard for other agreements, such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

The Corrections Act 2004 states that the minimum entitlement is that every person in prison can make at least one phone call of up to five minutes duration per week; however, New Zealand prisons provide greater access to phone calls than the minimum entitlement. People in prison are able to make calls from payphones within prisons using calling cards purchased from the canteen system or supplied by their families. Corrections' Prison Operations Manual policy on prisoner telephone calls is available on our website:

www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Communication

Calls can be for up to 15 minutes duration and are recorded for the purposes of telephone monitoring. Recordings of a person's telephone calls are subject to random and targeted monitoring in accordance with the Corrections Act 2004 and can be used as evidence against individuals carrying out harassment, intimidation, threats or other unlawful activities. When a person in prison makes a telephone call, the recipient is played an automated message advising them that the call is being made from within a prison to enable them to make an informed decision about accepting the call.

People in prison have access to call some free phone numbers at no charge. These include organisations and agencies such as budget advice, Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Social Development.

You requested:

Current policy/s on prisoner phone calls, including the price paid by prisoners, related policies and any policy on managing prisoners access/use of phone calls. Please also provide any material on prisoner phone calls policy prepared, received or gathered in the past six (e.g. research, policy development on alternative approaches, briefings etc).

The current policy on prisoner phone calls in Corrections-based prison sites is contained in the Prison Operations Manual (POM) under section C.02 Prisoner Telephone. As such, your request is declined under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information is publicly available. The following information is available on the Corrections website at: https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/policy_and_legislation/Prison-Operations-Manual/Communication/C.02-Prisoner-telephone

Other related prisoner phone call policies included within the publicly available POM are detailed below, and available at the link above:

- Telephone Criteria;
- Request by prisoner for approval of personal telephone;
- Verification of prisoner personal telephone number;
- Approval of prisoner personal telephone;
- Local Prison/prohibited and approved telephone numbers;
- Prisoner access to PTCC telephones;
- Prisoner access to non PTCCS phones;
- Cost of Calls;
- Monitoring prisoner calls;
- Removal of approved personal prisoner numbers and Pin, and
- Incoming calls for prisoners.

Corrections recognises that regular contact and support from family and friends can have a positive effect on a person's morale and play an integral part in their rehabilitation. The payphones used in Corrections-managed prisons are owned by Spark. People in prison purchase a Spark phone card via the P119 system which provides the same dollar worth of calling time. For example, a phone card purchased for \$20 provides \$20 worth of call time. As with all items available via the P119 system, Corrections must charge regular retail price in line with other suppliers, in order to maintain competitive neutrality.

However, in order to assist all people in prison with cost of calls, Corrections has negotiated specific call rates with Spark. For local calls, the rate for people in prison is identical to public call rates from pay phones. For calls to other national, mobile and international numbers, people in prison are charged less than the current rates for public calls from pay phones. The calling rates currently provided to prisoners at the payphone sites are as follows:

Call type	Rate
Local	Flat Rate - \$1 for up to 15 mins (max call time)
National	\$0.25 per minute
Cell Phone	\$0.35 per minute
International	\$0.90 per minute
Approved 0800 Numbers	Free

Corrections is currently running a pilot at Auckland Prison which allows people in prison to pay a flat fee of \$2 per week for all phone calls. Once the pilot is completed and suitability is further assessed, this may become the model used for all Corrections-managed prisons.

We have interpreted your request for any research, policy development, alternative approaches any briefings from the last six months to include any reports or guidance surrounding prisoner phone calls. Please find attached the requested information considered in scope of your request.

Corrections has balanced your interest in the requested information against the privacy interests of the individuals whose personal information is involved. We have determined that some information should be withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA, to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons.

Further information is withheld under section 6(c) of the OIA, as the disclosure of the information would be likely to prejudice the maintenance of the law, including the prevention, investigation, and detection of offences, and the right to a fair trial.

You will also note some information within this document has not been provided as it is outside of scope of your request.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with Corrections. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Please note that this response may be published on Corrections' website. Typically, responses are published monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Rachel Leota
National Commissioner

Guidance for unit staff on managing additional communication methods being introduced

Key messages

1. A number of measures are being taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our prisons. These include stopping private visits, temporary release, and non-essential temporary removal (as well as other things).
2. Stopping private visits, temporary release and non-essential temporary removal will significantly impact prisoners. There is likely to be additional tension amongst prisoners and concern on how they will continue to communicate with their family, friends and whanau.
3. Given this, there are a number of additional/enhanced communication methods we are providing to prisoners. These include:
 - a. Free phone cards (one free card per week for every prisoner with the value of \$5)
 - b. Additional CISCO phones being installed in units
 - c. Increased access to incoming prisoner emails

(1) Free phone cards

What?

1. Each prisoner will be given one free \$5 phone card per week

When?

2. This will come into practice from Tuesday 24 March 2020 onwards.
3. This will be reviewed every two weeks.

How?

4. The free phone cards will be sent to Prison Directors and are to be distributed once a week to prisoners by unit staff.

Actions for custodial staff

5. The free phone cards will be sent to Prison Directors and are to be distributed once a week to prisoners by unit staff.
6. It is important that the phone cards are distributed on the same day each week.

7. Each unit is required to keep a record of which prisoners are given a free phone card (this is to avoid giving out multiple free cards to one prisoner within one week). 6(c)

Things to consider

- Prisoners' use of telephones will likely increase.
- The number of prisoner telephones **that require a phone card** will NOT be increased.
- 6(c)
- 6(c)
- Custodial staff may experience an increase in workload due to more *C.01.Form.01 Prison telephone number request* forms being processed, and therefore more telephone numbers being vetted.
- Administration staff may experience an increase in workload due more telephone numbers being vetted by Custodial staff. This may mean more telephone numbers need to be loaded in the PTCCS systems.

(2) Additional CISCO phones in units

What?

8. CISCO desk phones are being distributed across the prison network for prisoner use.

When?

9. This will come into practice from Tuesday 24 March 2020 onwards.
10. This will be reviewed every two weeks.

How?

11. CISCO phones will be provided to each site for Prison Directors to distribute across units.
12. When selecting a room/office for the phone to be used, you must ensure there is nothing else in the room that the prisoner must not have access to. E.g. Prisoner files, operational documents, staff information, emails/unlocked network computers, or items they could take from the office.

Actions for custodial staff

13. The following instructions must be followed for all prisoner use of the CISCO phones:
- a. Only approved numbers from the prisoners' phone list can be dialled, at the prisoners' request, and for friends/whanau calls.
 - b. Other calls, such as to support agencies, case managers, probation officers, the NZPB and lawyers must also be managed similarly.
 - c. Staff must dial the phone number for the prisoner.
 - d. Staff must supervise prisoners using the phones and ensure;
 - I. the call isn't ended, and another call started
 - II. the prisoner is afforded privacy (including from staff)

14. When the call is finished, the phone number must be cleared from the phone *(instructions for clearing the details are available in the user guides for the particular phone model/series. The model number is located on the back of the phone).*



7912

or 7800



15. Ensure the handset is wiped clean after each use with a disinfectant wipe or spray and paper towels.

16. These phones will not require the use of a phone card. Therefore, unit staff will be required to closely monitor the length of phone calls and prisoners' use of the additional phone.

Things to consider

- [REDACTED] 6(c)
 - [REDACTED] 6(c)
- [REDACTED] unit staff will be required to use their discretion to prioritise the use of the additional phone. It is recommended that:
- Legal calls and calls for family emergencies are given first priority.
 - The additional phones are used, when necessary, to facilitate pre-sentencing interviews and conduct other pre-release activities with Probation Officers, Case Managers and other support agencies.
 - Use of the additional phone for general prisoner calls is on a case-by-case basis and closely monitored by unit staff.
 - The standard unit phones are to be fully utilised and prisoners will be able to use their free \$5 phone card per week to stay connected with their family, friends and whanau during this time.

Instructions/guides for the phones can also be found by searching “Cisco Desk Phone”, in Tatou.

(3) Increased access to incoming prisoner emails

What?

17. Emails will be promoted as an avenue for family, friends and whanau to keep in contact with prisoners.

How to use the phones - prisons

1. Due to the restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, cisco desk phones have been installed in your prisons for prisoners to use. Units have been given additional phones to ensure that prisoners can keep in contact with their whanau during these unprecedented times.
2. [REDACTED] 6(c)
3. It is **vital** that prison staff vet the numbers before calling as the operator is only there to connect **approved** calls.

4. [REDACTED] 6(c)

5. If a prisoner wants to make a phone call, ask the prisoner for the phone number.

6. [REDACTED] 6(c)

7. [REDACTED] 6(c)

8. [REDACTED] 6(c)

9. [REDACTED] 6(c)

[REDACTED]

How to use the phones – operator

Due to the restrictions in prisons relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, cisco desk phones are installed in prisons for prisoners to use. Units have been given additional phones to ensure that prisoners can keep contact with their whanau during these unprecedented times.

You will connect calls from prisoners to **approved** recipients, 6(c)

[REDACTED]

6(c) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Contact details to book phone calls with prisoners

1. Due to the restrictions in prisons relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, CISCO desk phones have been installed in prisons for prisoners to use.
2. Units have been given additional phones to ensure that professional who are assisting prisoners e.g. Lawyers, Psychologists, Case Managers & Programme Facilitators can keep in contact with their clients. A booking system has been introduced as the prisoner may not always be available due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
3. Below are the contact details for the different Sites.
4. Some are using group emails, in these cases leave your contact details and someone will respond with a suitable time for you to call your client.
5. When booking a call with a prisoner please remember that prison operations may change and your call may be unable to proceed as scheduled. Where this is the case, the prison will make all efforts to contact you to reschedule the call.
6. Please also consider that in some areas the ability to move prisoners to the phones is limited. This can be due to security classifications, staff availability and physical characteristics of each site or unit.

NORTHERN REGION			
Prison	Unit	Phone number	Comment
NRCF	General	Out of Scope	
	General		
	Weka Unit		
	Kahu Unit		
AP	Units 1-5		

		Out of Scope
	Units 6&8	
	AP Units 10	
	AP Unit 11	
	AP Unit 12	
	AP Unit 13	
MECF	Site Contac t	
	Site Contac t	
	Site Contac t	
	Site Contac t	
	Site Contac t	
ARWC F	Site Contac t	
ASCF		