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Health Services

**USE OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION
DEVICES**

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(Lt Col Steven Bodily)

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This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive 41-2, *Medical Support*. This instruction establishes policies and provides instructions on the use of wireless communication devices in the 59th Medical Wing (MDW). This instruction applies to all personnel assigned, attached, or under contract to the 59 MDW. This instruction does not apply to the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule available at <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af61/afirms/afirms>.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Updated cellular phone use.

1. Cellular phones, two-way pagers, walkie-talkies, two-way family radio services (FRS) walkie-talkies, and wireless personal data assistants (PDA) pose a potential electromagnetic interference (EMI) risk. The risk is greatest when the devices are operated in high density electrical equipment areas and/or near patients who are in critical condition and highly dependent on monitoring or life-support equipment. Recent studies by the Food and Drug Administration /Center for Devices and Radiological Health, *Recommendations for EMC/EMI in Healthcare Facilities*; Emergency Care Research Institute, *Cell Phones and Electromagnetic Interference Revisited*; Mayo Clinic Proceedings, *Cellular Telephone Interference with Medical Equipment*; and Critical Care, *Interference by New-Generation Mobile Phones on Critical Care Medical Equipment*, recommend that with some precautions the risk is minimized and use of these

devices are unlikely to cause interference with medical devices located in patient care areas of hospitals.

2. Digital and analog cellular phones, two-way beepers, and wireless PDAs are authorized to be used throughout the facility with the following restrictions.

2.1. A minimum of 3 feet (1 meter) distance from medical and laboratory equipment must be maintained. **Note:** Cellular phones, when left on, intermittently transmit network signals even if no call is in progress.

2.2. Cellular phone users will use proper telephone etiquette such as placing phones on silence or vibrate modes and speaking in a soft voice so as not to disturb patients or visitors.

2.3. Two-Way Radios. Two-way radios, walkie-talkies and FRS have a higher power output than cell phones. As their output easily penetrates walls, floors, and ceilings they present a higher risk for equipment interference and are prohibited from transmitting within 25 feet of patients connected to medical equipment. However, they may remain in listening mode.

3. The 59 MDW Safety Manager, staff members, and supervisors will enforce this policy within building 4550. Any incident thought to have been influenced by EMI must be promptly reported to Biomedical Engineering at 292-5103.

4. Adopted Form. AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*.

ROBERT U. HAMILTON, Colonel, USAF, MSC
Administrator

Attachment 1

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

References

AFPD 41-2, *Medical Support*, 16 August 1993

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 2008

Cell Phones and Electromagnetic Interference Revisited, December 2006

Cellular Telephone Interference with Medical Equipment, March 2007

Interference by New-Generation Mobile Phones on Critical Care Medical Equipment,
September 2007

Recommendations for EMC/EMI in Healthcare Facilities, October 2007

Acronyms and Abbreviations

EMI—Electromagnetic Interference

FRS—Family Radio Services

MDW—Medical Wing

PDA—Personal Data Assistant