

Top 6 Rules for Using Private Cell Phones at Work

Having your cell phone at work can be useful but it can also be very disruptive. Your friends and family can reach you anytime, anywhere, which can be annoying.

When you're on your own time, the choice to turn off your cell phone is entirely yours. When it comes to using your cell phone at work, however, you have to be mindful of your co-workers and your boss, not to mention your own ability to get your job done. Here are some rules you should follow if you have your cell phone at work.

1. Turn Your Cell Phone Ringer Off

If you have your cell phone at work, it shouldn't ring. If you don't want to turn off your cell phone completely, at least set it to vibrate. The sounds of different ring tones going off all the time can be very annoying to others.

2. Use Your Cell Phone Only for Important Calls

If you have your cell phone at work, you should only use it for important calls. What should you classify as an important call? The school nurse calling to say your child is ill, your child calling to say he's arrived home from school safely, and family emergencies that you must deal with immediately are important. Your friend calling to chat, your child calling to say the dog had an accident, or your mom calling to tell you your cousin Tilly is engaged should not be considered important.

3. Let Your Cell Phone Calls Go to Voice Mail

While you are at work if you are in doubt about whether an incoming call is important, let voice mail pick it up. It will take much less time to check your messages than it will to answer the call and then tell the caller you can't talk.

4. Find a Private Place to Make Cell Phone Calls

While it's okay to use your cell phone at work for private calls during breaks, don't stay at your desk. Find somewhere else to talk, where your conversation can't be overheard, even if what you're discussing isn't personal. You may be on a break but your co-

workers have a job to do.

5. Don't Bring Your Cell Phone Into the Restroom ... Ever

This rule should apply to using your cell phone at work or anywhere. Why? Well, if you must ask — you never know who's in there; the person on the other end of the line will hear bathroom sounds, e.g., toilets flushing; it is an invasion of your co-workers' privacy.

6. Don't Bring Your Cell Phone to Meetings

Even if you have your cell phone set to vibrate, if you receive a call you will be tempted to see who it's from. This is not only rude, it is a clear signal to your boss that your mind isn't 100 percent on your job. All calls can wait until your meeting is over or until there is a break. Remember, there was a time before we had cell phones.