



9 September 2020

C123415

Baw Russell

fyi-request-13126-80d10aa6@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Baw Russell

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 tail.

Rachel Leota
National Commissioner