



**Northern  
Communications**

**Northern Communication Services Inc.**

And all associated companies and departments

**Employee Handbook**

Revised October 2018



# Northern Communications

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## Section 1: Introduction

This Handbook is designed to acquaint you with Northern Communication Services Inc. and provide you with information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting your employment. Northern Communication Services Inc. hereinafter to be referred to as “Northern Communications” or “Northern Group” within this document.

The information contained in this Handbook applies to all employees within the five (5) divisions (Northern Communications, True Steel Security, Connected Care Division (CareLink Advantage and HelpLine), Northern911, and Alternative Answers) of Northern Communication Services Inc. Note that there are differences between full time and part time, commissioned employees, etc. **Should any policy be in conflict with a collective agreement covering an employee, that employee shall follow the provisions of their collective agreement.** Following the policies described in this Handbook is considered a condition of continued employment. However, nothing in this Handbook alters an employee’s status. The contents of this Handbook shall not constitute nor be construed as a promise of employment or as a contract between the Company and any of its employees. The Handbook is a summary of our policies, which are presented here only as a matter of information, and can be altered by Northern Communications at any time.

This Handbook should be read in its entirety so that employees familiarize themselves with Northern Communications’ facilities, policies and procedures, thus avoiding the inadvertent contravention of them. For a more in-depth explanation of the duties of the department that you work in please refer to the Policies and Procedures Manual for your department or ask management.

You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this Handbook. Our objective is to provide you with a work environment that is constructive to both personal and professional growth.

This will be an evolving document. We urge you to bring things forward that we have missed, that you have questions about or that you feel should be included. We know as time passes the document will change.

In Canada, the power to make laws is divided between the federal and provincial governments. In the area of employment law, the federal government has jurisdiction over employment law for specific works and undertakings. Northern Communications is classified as a federally regulated company since it operates in the telecommunication sector. This means that labour rights and responsibilities of Northern Communications and its employees are defined by the *Canada Labour Code*.

### Changes in Policy

This Handbook supersedes all previous employee handbooks and memos that may have been issued from time to time on subjects covered in this Handbook.

However, since our business and our organization are subject to change, we reserve the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute with or without notice all or any part of our policies, procedures, and benefits at any time.

No individual manager has the authority to change company policies at any time. If you are uncertain about any policy or procedure, speak with your immediate manager.

### **What You Can Expect From the Northern Communications Group of Companies**

We appreciate your commitment to Northern Communications. As a valued member of our team, you can expect us to show the same commitment towards you. We do this by striving to offer competitive compensation, respect and recognition for good performance and a productive work environment.

### **What Northern Communications Expects From You**

Your first responsibility is to know your own duties and how to do them properly, correctly, safely and pleasantly. Secondly, you are expected to cooperate with your fellow co-workers, maintain a good team attitude and be professional and accountable. How you interact with fellow co-workers and our clients, and how you accept direction affects our success. Consequently, whatever your position, you have the important assignment to perform every task to the very best of your ability. The result will be better performance for us overall and personal satisfaction for you.

### **Our Customers**

- Customers are the most important people in the office...in person or by phone, mail or any other way.
- Customers are not dependent on US...we are dependent on them.
- Customers are not an interruption of our work...they are the purpose of it.
- We are not doing them a favour by serving them...they are doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to do so.
- Customers are not someone to argue or match wits with.
- Keeping this in mind makes a successful company and successful employees.
- Customers pay our bills and our wages. They are the ones who employ us.

### **Our Service**

Our business is Service. As an example, when other organizations close down due to severe weather conditions, storms, power outages etc., our company is expected to carry on business.

They are depending on us.

Service is our business and what keeps the company in business.

## **Northern Group Values**

Our business philosophy is based upon five core values:

### **Service**

- Always make customer service a priority
- We are committed to customer service and quality
- We conduct ourselves professionally at all times

### **Integrity**

- Do what is right, honest and fair
- Do the right thing; do not take the easy way out
- Take accountability for our actions, without passing blame to others

### **Respect**

- Treat all customers, suppliers, employees and co-workers with dignity and consideration
- Value the contributions of others
- Take the time to understand the perspective of others
- Foster an environment of diversity that respects and appreciates individual differences

### **Support our Communities**

- Support the company's effort in strengthening the communities in which we live and work
- Support the volunteerism efforts of our fellow employees
- We give back to our communities through donating a percentage of proceeds to the community and helping charities

### **Commitment**

- Everyone is willing to do what is necessary to ensure the success of the business and each other, and comply with the requirements of the law
- Follow through on commitments

## **About the Northern Group**

Northern Communications started out in 1954 as an answering service. As the years went by, Northern Communications branched out into the alarm monitoring, telephone, radio and cellular business. As it expanded, Northern Communications acquired several smaller answering service, paging and alarm companies.

After several years, the shareholders of Northern Communications decided to restructure the company to concentrate solely on four (4) areas:

**1. Northern Communications**

- Answering service, messaging and paging
- **Website:** <http://northerncom.com/>

**2. True Steel Security**

- Alarm, Camera and Card access sales and service
- **Website:** <http://www.truesteel.com>

**3. Connected Care Division**

- Medical assistance for independent living
- Includes HelpLine Personal Emergency Response Service (PERS)
- **Website:** <http://www.carelinkadvantage.ca/>
- **Website:** <http://www.helplinemedicalalarm.ca>

**4. Northern 911**

- Life Safety Services of 911 call routing, alarm monitoring, Fire Department dispatch and more
- **Website:** <http://northern911.com/>

**5. Alternative Answers**

- Answering service, confidential Crime Stoppers services, TIPS, PREA
- **Website:** <http://crimestopperscallcentre.com>

**1. Northern Communications**

Northern has its roots in providing answering service. We still do. And we provide so much more! As the Message Centre we answer calls for companies large and small. Some we only provide afterhours service to. Some we provide service to 24/7. Some have a receptionist and we provide overflow service to handle incoming calls when they are too busy. For some we are the receptionist. We take messages, book appointments, dispatch response personnel, (Plumbers, Electricians, you name it!) We handle the calls when people call into their company to say that they are sick and can't make the shift. We even fill shifts for some companies by connecting to their company staff information and getting the next qualified person on call. A lot of businesses could not survive without our assistance.

Also in the Messaging department is paging. Although declining in recent years, we still rent out new pagers every month. They are a good reliable and dependable form of communications and many companies still use them. In Northern Ontario we provide the best coverage of all providers.

**2. True Steel Security**

Northern Communications has been in the security business since the early seventies. This became so important that to handle this section of our business, a separate department called



True Steel Security was formed. With mergers and acquisitions this is now the largest and most respected alarm company in Northern Ontario.

At True Steel we supply, install, monitor and service alarms systems for all applications and needs. This includes regular Burglary and Fire alarms and also includes medical, environmental, water flow, gas odor and more. In addition we install CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) systems and Card Access.

True Steel has attained General Electric's "Security Pro" Dealership status. This standing is based on customer satisfaction, years in business, credibility & stability, proper licensing and reputation within the community. Out of more than 300 international dealers, we are the first company in the world to achieve "**Dealer of the Year**" by GE twice in a row.

We have an alliance with Our Children Our Future. The goal of the alliance is to make homes and communities safer and more secure. At the heart of the alliance is an education campaign, "Security Is A Family Matter," aimed at reducing child abuse and other root causes of criminal behaviour.

### **3. Connected Care Division**

Northern Communications Connected Care Division comprises of two levels of service. Helpline, our basic Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) offering immediate connectivity at the push of a button to a trained dispatcher. CareLink Advantage is our premium offering, allowing seniors and others needing care to live safely and independently at home at a fraction of the cost of a nursing home. It includes the option for a PERS medical button also.

#### **i) Helpline:**

At True Steel, we discovered that many of our clients were using Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS). We looked at the demographics and had client focus groups on how to improve service to them. We decided that this was so important that we created a new department called CareLink to focus directly on this area.

We have regular simple systems where the client can push the button to call for Help and our monitoring station responds on 2-way voice. We call these type of systems PERS and expanded our clientele here when we purchased the Hospital Helpline systems. Since the purchase of Helpline we have now merged CareLink and Helpline into one name Helpline, although you may from time-to-time hear the word 'CareLink'.

#### **ii) CareLink Advantage:**

As people age concerns of falls, wandering, eating and medication compliance are of greater concern. CareLink Advantage is a system based on proven alarm technology whereby notifications are sent in real time to Caregivers (generally family or friends) alerting them of potential issues that require their attention. Notifications can be sent to many mobile devices, including an option for video. CareLink Advantage is flexible by design offering a wide range of equipment to address their concerns and as the client concerns change so can the system. For even greater safety and security, we have integrated the medical button (similar to Helpline) that can be used in the event of an emergency. Our success is growing and CareLink

Advantage is now paid for by the Department of Social Development in New Brunswick for approved clients. CareLink Advantage is also recommended by Doctors and Caregivers for seniors who live alone, or others who are at greater risk.

#### **4. Northern911**

Northern911 is the Life Safety side of the company. We help people in times of need and handling emergency calls. It's what we do all day, every day. We provide 911 (E911 and VoIP) Call Routing, Alarm Monitoring, Fire Dispatch and Telematics monitoring. Our services are proven and our results are excellent.

We provide alarm monitoring for True Steel Security and a number of other third party companies on a wholesale basis. We are the largest VoIP call routing organization in Canada. If a VoIP user calls 911, the call is sent to us. We confirm their address and then route the call to the appropriate authorities anywhere in North America. Over fifty volunteer fire departments depend on us to provide them with Fire Dispatch.

#### **5. Alternative Answers**

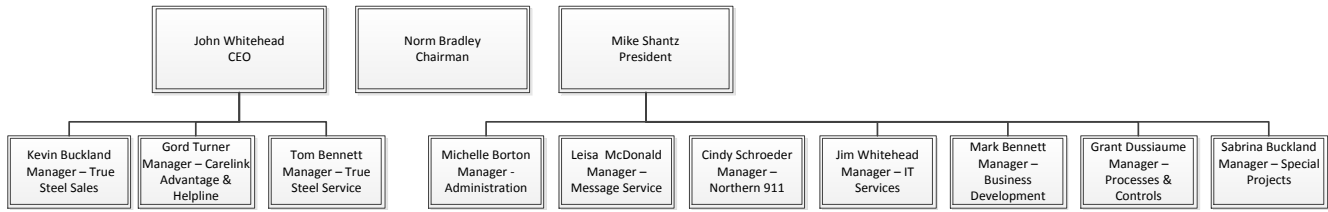
In 2013 Northern Communications acquired the assets of Alternative Call Centre, which became part of Northern Communications' Message Centre Division.

In addition to providing multiply types of answering service to large and small companies, we also provide a variety of confidential services to International Crime Stoppers programs.

#### **Awards**

Northern Communications and various divisions have received numerous awards and recognition for their focus on providing excellent and reliable services and for community involvement. In addition to winning the national Canadian Call Centre Award of Excellence on a number of occasions, we were presented the Tom Ryan Award for Ethics, Integrity, and Quality above all. This special award is to recognize industry leaders in the answering service and contact management industry whose overall companies are founded on principles of quality service delivery, ethical business practices, commitment to a progressive working environment, and on contribution to the business and industry communities.

### Organizational Chart



## Section 2: Working with Northern Communication Services

The descriptions contained in this Section describe the policies and procedures that will be of interest to those already working with or starting an employment relationship with Northern Communications.

### Attendance

Every employee plays a vital role in keeping our business productive and competitive. Northern Communications expects employees to be prompt and regular in their attendance. Management recognizes that occasionally there are good reasons for tardiness in reporting to work, or for absence from work.

Employees are responsible for being at work on days scheduled, on time and not leaving early without authorization from their immediate manager. If you are late, your usual duties and responsibilities must be performed by your fellow employees until you arrive. This increases everyone's work load and makes the job more difficult for the entire group. Employees are also responsible for notifying their manager, immediately, of any absence, the reason(s) for the absence, and their expected return date. The employee should notify their manager as much in advance of the absence as possible.

Employees may be subject to counseling and/or formal discipline if they are absent or late without authorization for three (3) occurrences in a six (6) month period. Absence from work for three (3) consecutive work days, without notification to the immediate manager, is considered to be a voluntary resignation of the employee from employment with Northern Communications.

### Change of Status

In order to keep our records up to date, we ask that every employee update their Payworks profile and inform the Human Resources/Payroll Office of any changes such as:

- Name,
- Address,
- Telephone number,
- Tax information,
- Social Insurance Number,
- Marital status,
- Family status,
- Beneficiary.

### Employment Categories

#### 1. Permanent full-time

Persons hired for an indefinite period of time that are required to work more than 24 hours per week and have successfully completed the standard 90 working day probationary period.

#### 2. Permanent part-time

Persons hired for an indefinite period of time that are regularly scheduled to work 24 hours or less per week and have successfully completed the standard 90 working day probationary period.

3. Temporary full-time

Persons hired for a designated term (contract) or task that are required to work between 25 and 40 hours per week. The temporary employee may be released from the position at any time at the discretion of the employer and/or employment in the position will cease upon the completion of the designated term (contract) or task.

4. Temporary part-time

Persons hired for a designated term or task that are required to work 24 hours or less per week. The temporary employee may be released from the position at any time at the discretion of the employer and/or employment in the position will cease upon the completion of the designated term (contract) or task.

5. Probation employee

An employee who has not yet successfully completed their probationary period. Standard probationary period consists of ninety (90) days of work.

6. Other

Northern Communications may employ other contract positions such as casual labour and sub-contract out some of our work.

## Hours of Work

Regular Full-time Working Hours are normally eight (8) hours per shift for a total of approximately forty (40) hours per week. An unpaid eating period (either 30 minutes or 1 hour) shall be taken approximately in the middle of the shift (as scheduled by your manager).

Employees who work for five (5) consecutive hours or more are entitled to a 30 minute, unpaid eating period, which must be taken within those five (5) hours. The eating period can be divided and taken as two separate 15 minute breaks. These eating periods cannot be taken at the beginning or end of the shift.

Employees are entitled to a fifteen (15) minute rest period with pay for every four (4) hour period worked. Such rest periods should be taken such that they do not interfere with customer requirements and are subject to work load. These fifteen minute breaks cannot be combined and cannot be used at the beginning or end of the shift.

*\*employees are advised not to leave company property on their lunch and breaks. They may choose to leave company property during lunch and breaks, but will do so at their own risk, as the company is not liable for any injuries or accidents which may occur while an employee leaves company property on such breaks.*

## Building Etiquette

The lunchrooms are provided for your use and convenience. We ask you to leave the tables, counters, dishes, etc., clean when you leave. Remember, your fellow employees will be using the facilities after you.

Food, etc. being kept in the refrigerator and not eaten within a reasonable period should be disposed of before it becomes offensive to other users.

With respect to washrooms, again, these facilities are used by your fellow employees and should be clean and tidy when you leave. If you notice a problem, kindly inform your Manager so repairs can be arranged.

From Fall to Spring, employees are expected to remove their outdoor footwear when entering the building. A shoe brush to clean outdoor shoes and shoe shelves have been installed at the entrance so that outdoor and indoor shoes may be left at the entrance.

Employees that use the main entrance are asked to clean their outdoor footwear using the shoe brush located in the atrium prior to removing them and entering the office area. There are a number of rubber shoe trays throughout the building which should be used to leave outdoor footwear as well.

### **Nepotism**

Northern Communications permits employment of relatives where they will not have any type of direct reporting relationship.

For these purposes, a “relative” is defined as a spouse (including common-law and same-sex spouse), child, parent, in-law, sister, or brother. It is the responsibility of the employee or potential employee to disclose the existence of any such relationship, in writing, to their manager or the hiring manager.

If two employees marry while employed by Northern Communications, we reserve the right to transfer one of the employees to a different position where deemed necessary.

### **Orientation**

All new employees shall receive an orientation session which will encompass an overview of general policies, procedures and operations. This will also provide employees, new to either a position or the Northern Group, an opportunity to learn the performance expectations management has with regard to the position in question.

### **Overtime**

For any hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in a one (1) week period, and for any hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in one (1) day, the employee will be entitled to Overtime Pay that is paid at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times the employee's base hourly rate. There are occasions where overtime will be required.

Please note, that for overtime calculations, the day that your shift starts is considered the day you work. For example, if you work the graveyard shift followed immediately by the afternoon shift, the hours worked on afternoon shift ARE NOT overtime because the start time is on different days.

All Overtime must be authorized by the employee's immediate manager in order for it to qualify for Overtime Pay.

Commuting between home and the workplace is not considered working, travel or waiting time.

Approved overtime pay is normally paid in the first pay period following the period in which the overtime is worked.

In emergency situations, system failures etc., we must respond 24-hours per day, seven days per week. Under these circumstances, prior notice to work overtime cannot be given.

Anyone working in a managerial role is not entitled to overtime as per the Canada Labour Code.

It is possible that some staff may come in early, stay late, or attend at unscheduled times, to organize themselves or receive mentorship from others when they are not scheduled even though this is not a practice that is required by the Company.

We set clear start times in our schedules, and strive to ensure all employees have the tools to effectively manage their time on their shifts. We appreciate the strong culture of dedication and work ethic that exists within our staff. At the same time, we would hope that if team members felt pressured to work unscheduled hours, they would bring this to the attention of management to be addressed.

### **Performance Appraisals**

Performance Appraisals are in place to periodically provide feedback to employees by informing them on their actual performance compared to the established performance standards. Performance Appraisals will be used by management to determine future training needs and potentially for determining merit increases.

Performance Appraisals will be conducted on an occasional basis using a consistent and fair appraisal method. Management will endeavor to ensure Performance Appraisals are fair for all employees, that feedback is provided to all employees, and that any training needs will be addressed. Merit Pay Increases may be evaluated by management following the Performance Appraisal.

### **Probationary Period**

Probationary Periods are useful for allowing us to evaluate the work habits and abilities of newly hired employees. The Probationary Period also serves as an orientation period for new hires to learn and understand what is expected of them in the employment relationship and how to perform at an acceptable level. Either Northern Communications or the employee may end the

employment relationship at any time during the Probationary Period without notice or pay in lieu of notice (except where notice or pay in lieu of notice is required by legislation).

All new and rehired employees shall serve a Probationary Period. A new employee will be considered on probation until they have completed ninety (90) working days within any twelve (12) calendar months unless otherwise noted in the Offer of Employment letter. A shift must be a minimum of four (4) hours to qualify as one day of work. Extended absences during the Probationary Period may extend the period by the length of the absence. Under special circumstances, a probationary period may be extended.

Employees will be notified upon the completion of the Probationary Period.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

Many employment opportunities at Northern Communications are posted for a minimum five days. They may be posted on Northern Communications website and on the websites of affiliated organizations. Occasionally, they are posted on employment websites or with an employment agency. Applications are encouraged from current employees but will be screened in the same manner as applications received from outside applicants.

Applicants are invited to submit their application, along with a current résumé, demonstrating that they meet the minimum criteria for the position being sought. At the closing date, all applications are screened, and only candidates selected for interview are contacted. If the interview is positive, references will be contacted. Depending on the feedback provided, a position may be offered to the applicant.

Accommodations are available on request for candidates with disabilities taking part in all aspects of the selection process.

### **Salary and Pay Periods**

Northern Communications believes in fairly and equitably rewarding each employee for the sustained competent performance of a job. Employees are paid by direct deposit on a bi-weekly (approximately once every second Friday) basis to your bank.

All payroll time sheets and changes are to be submitted to the Human Resources/Payroll Office by 10:00 a.m. the Monday prior to the end of the pay week.

The prime determinants of pay levels and/or pay increases are the individual's sustained past performance, the individual's present wage related to the Job Rate for the job (Range Index) and the time the individual has been performing the job. Length of service or tenure in a position does not, standing alone, justify granting pay increases.

Merit increase reviews will be conducted on occasion in an effort to reward job performance.

### **Pay Works**



Pay Works is our third party payroll provider. Their service provides an employee self-service feature that allows employees to view their paystubs, update contact information and also to request time off (i.e. vacation) and tracks sick time.

Upon hire you will receive a Welcome email with your user name and a temporary password. Please login to the site <https://payroll.payworks.ca/Loginscreen.asp?err=loggedoff> and you will be given instructions to change your password and view your pay information.

### **How to submit Time Off Request through Payworks**

1. Log into Payworks.
2. Go to the Time Management menu.
3. From this menu choose Time Off Requests.
4. Choose the date and time you wish to be off using the Start Time and End Time fields. To choose the date, click on the calendar beside the date.
5. Choose a reason for your time off request using the drop down menu. If you wish, you can also add comments in the Comments – Employee box.
6. Once you have chosen the date, time and reason for your request, you must choose an Approver. Choose your manager's name from the drop down menu. Then uncheck the remainder of the boxes below.
7. Once you have verified that all the information is accurate, click the Save button. This will send off your request.
8. Once your manager has processed your request, you will receive a message when you log into Payworks. This message is your manager's reply to your request. If you have any questions about this reply, please contact your manager to discuss it further.

Please note that Payworks login accounts are disabled upon termination or resignation of employment. It is the employee's responsibility to properly store any previous T4's or pay statements in an accessible format as they will no longer have access to Payworks.

For more information please see the Payworks Employee FAQ's which can be found on the shared drive.

### **Non-Competition**

After leaving the Company, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, employees cannot engage in any business activities which could be considered in direct competition with the Company and/or engage in the solicitation of any of the Company's customers for a period of 3 years, unless he/she has first obtained the Company's prior written consent.

### **Section 3: Personnel Practices and Policies**

The descriptions in this section relate to the personal conduct expected of employees at The Northern Group of Companies. Personal misconduct will not be condoned by Northern Communications and any individual in contravention of any of the following policies may be subject to disciplinary action, which in some cases, may be up to and including discharge for cause without notice or pay in lieu thereof.

#### **Accessibility (AODA) Customer Service Standard**

Northern Communications maintains an ongoing and long term commitment to their Accessibility Service Plan. Northern Communications is committed to ensure that all employees who provide services or goods to the public, customers or others will be made aware of the policies in place at Northern Communications to provide accessible services to those with disabilities and will receive training on this process. For more information, refer to the AODA Customer Service Standard Policy.

Our customer service policy can be seen here <http://www.northerncom.com/privacy2.php>

#### **Accessible Emergency Information**

Northern Communications is committed to providing customers with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities individualized emergency response information when necessary.

#### **Building Security**

The security of our buildings, assets and personnel is extremely important. We have multiple cameras both inside and outside the buildings and record the video and audio.

Monitored security systems and/or controlled entrances and/or surveillance cameras protect all Northern Communications buildings, including the leased facilities.

The first employee to enter the building must disarm the alarm system. The last person to leave must make sure the building is secure with the doors locked and arm the alarm system.

Being in the security business and providing 911 services we need to secure our own buildings. All staff are provided with photo ID badges. These should be worn so they are visible at all times. If you see someone who you don't recognize without a badge, feel free to question who they are and why they are in the building.

If your key/card access does not work, then you need to identify yourself when entering the building and inform your manager. Do not let anyone in the building if they don't have a badge and/or they can't be identified and verified.

If your card is lost, please inform your supervisor immediately.

Replacement cards are \$10 if the company provided access card is lost. Replacement lanyard and badge covers are also available and cost \$4. The money is to be paid to the Department Manager.

All visitors are required to sign in and provide government issues photo ID to be issued a visitor's pass. All visitors must be accompanied by an employee for the duration of their visit.

It is a condition of entry and exit that employees may be asked to present any bags or parcels for inspection. Northern Communications retains the right to detain an employee and request the Police to attend. Personal searches will only be conducted by Policy should they deem it necessary.

### **Company Property**

Unauthorized personal use of company property (e.g. postage meter, copy machine, fax machine, video equipment) is not permitted and will be viewed as theft. "Borrowing" supplies for home use is stealing.

Any person, who removes any items that are company property from the building without specific authorization from a Manager, will give the Company cause to dismiss the employee without notice.

Theft of "ANY" type from the company, fellow employees, clients or the general public may result in immediate termination.

All company property assigned to an employee for the purposes of their employment is to be returned within 48 hours of the employment relationship ending

### **Confidentiality**

Northern Communications has been able to build up its clientele over the years because people trust us. We sometimes serve competing businesses. We have gained that trust for many reasons but perhaps the most important of all is confidentiality. It is absolutely essential that all information about a customer remain confidential.

All customer information is the property of Northern Communications and cannot be released in any form without the permission of a manager. Breach of this rule may lead to immediate dismissal.

After termination for whatever reason, no employee may use in any manner any confidential information, including but not limited to the customers list obtained during their employment. Unauthorized release of any confidential information may result in legal action.

Northern Communications regards all information related to customers/clients, or employees, and any proprietary information or trade secrets as strictly confidential. Northern Communications will take every effort necessary to respect the right to privacy of its customers and employees and to protect its proprietary information.

All employees of Northern Communications are to sign and abide by the standard “Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Form” and maintain the confidentiality of information, in regards to proprietary and confidential business information, they are privy to in the course of their employment at Northern Communications. This policy continues even after the employment relationship between Northern Communications and the employee has ended.

Should an employee wish to view their own personal information that is currently held by Northern Communications, they may do so by making a request to the Human Resources/Payroll Office. No information may be removed from the employee’s file by the employee. If the employee feels that information contained in their personnel file is inaccurate, they may request in writing to the Human Resources/Payroll Office that the inaccurate information be altered or removed from the personnel file.

You can see more of our Privacy Policy at <http://www.northerncom.com/privacy2.php>

### **Conflict of Interest**

Integrity and commitment are among Northern Communication’s core values. A conflict of interest arises when an employee is faced with a choice of acting in some matter where the interests of Northern Communications conflict with the interests of the staff or any other person to whom the staff owes a duty.

You must not engage in, or give the appearance of engaging in any activity involving a conflict or a reasonably foreseeable conflict between your personal interests and those of Northern Communications. There must be no divided allegiances between employees, officers, and directors and Northern Communications. Any outside employment or outside business involvement by staff must be made known to your manager before it commences. If after review Northern Communications agrees to allow the staff to continue, written approval will be provided to the staff with a copy placed in the personnel file.

The following are illustrative of situations to avoid:

- Working for another company in a full-time, part-time, temporary, casual or advisory capacity;
- Serving as a director, officer or consultant of any company that does business with, or is a competitor of Northern Communications;
- Disclosure of Northern Communications information, data or records of a confidential nature to unauthorized people, or using such information for personal gain;
- Ownership of, interest in, or participating directly or indirectly in a company or concern that does business with, or who is a competitor of, Northern Communications;
- Using Northern Communications equipment, supplies and/or services for personal gain;

- Conducting any type of business for personal gain from Northern Communications office facilities, or using Northern Communications facilities to conduct personal business interests;
- Engaging, during working hours, in activities which are not directly related to and required in the performance of your duties, on behalf of individuals, associations or other companies, with or without remuneration, that deprive Northern Communications of your services. Exceptions may be made on a specific and irregular basis, with the express approval of your manager.

### **Accepting Gifts**

The policy of Northern Communications is to ensure that employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the giving and receiving of gifts, favours or entertainment from customers.

The term “gifts” in this policy includes business entertainment, as well as gift items. The giving of business gifts is a customary way to strengthen business relationships and, with some restrictions, is a lawful business practice.

It is our policy that employees may give and receive appropriate, lawful business gifts in connection with their employment provided that such gifts are nominal in value and not given or received with the intent or prospect of influencing the recipient’s business decision-making. For purposes of this policy, nominal value is defined as no more than \$50 per item.

Under no circumstances may an employee accept or offer gifts of cash or cash equivalents, such as gift certificates.

It is imperative that the acceptance of any gift, favour, or entertainment could withstand public scrutiny with no damage to our reputation.

If you plan to give or accept a business gift of more than a nominal value, you must inform your supervisor prior to doing so.

### **Criminal Reference Check**

Given that Northern Communications is an alarm monitoring, paging, dispatching, answering service business, a satisfactory criminal reference check is a Bona Fide Occupational Requirement for all positions within the Northern Group of Companies and a condition of employment. A satisfactory criminal record check is to be completed every five (5) years. Employees are also required to complete an annual criminal declaration form which identifies that the employee has maintained a clear criminal record within the last year. Employees will be reimbursed for their satisfactory criminal reference check every five years. As part of the hiring process, applicants are required to pay for and provide a satisfactory criminal reference.

### **Dress Code**

Northern Communications' dress code is to ensure we maintain a professional business atmosphere by requiring all employees to dress in a certain and consistent manner.

Office employees are expected to present themselves in a neat and professional manner and dress in a fashion referred to as "business casual".

For these purposes, business casual will include collared shirts (dress or golf), khakis, slacks, skirts, dresses, dress shoes and sweaters.

The following items will not be considered business casual:

- Sweat or track pants;
- Jogging pants;
- Jeans (exceptions may be made for certain types of work and/or occasions)
- Pants that expose the midriff, underwear, or leggings;
- Gym shorts;
- Bicycle shorts or other athletic shorts;
- Low-cut tops;
- Halter tops;
- Spaghetti strap tops;
- Tops that expose the midriff or underwear;
- Mini-skirts;
- Any form of clothing that is mesh, sheer, see-through or otherwise revealing;
- Any form of clothing that is generally offensive, controversial, disruptive or otherwise distracting;
- Any form of clothing that is overtly commercial, contains political, personal or offensive messages;
- Hats;
- Pajamas;
- Plastic flip-flops or sandals;
- Slippers; and
- Beach footwear.

Employees who have questions about what may be acceptable as business casual attire may contact their supervisor. Employees who are dressed inappropriately, in the opinion of their supervisor, may be sent home and be required to return to work in acceptable attire. The time away from work will be unpaid.

Technical employees are expected to wear the company shirt and are allowed to wear jeans and shorts that are in good condition and provide a professional appearance.

### **Driving Of Company or Private Vehicles for Work Purposes**

Employees who operate company vehicles are required to perform a monthly vehicle check and complete a **Vehicle Inspection Checklist** form. This form should be completed and submitted to your department Manager at the end of month. If any items are not satisfactory, the driver is to

notify their immediate Supervisor within one business day. If the item jeopardizes the health and safety of the driver or passengers, do not use the vehicle and immediately notify your Supervisor.

As a condition of employment, employees whose work requires operation of a motor vehicle must complete the statement of valid driver's license form, present and maintain a valid driver's license and a driving record acceptable to our insurer. Any changes in an employee's driving record (these can include and are not limited to speed tickets, moving violations, criminal charges, etc.) must be reported to their Manager and the Administration Manager immediately.

Speeding is dangerous and can negatively impact the company's reputation. As such, speeding is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Employees must not exceed the posted speed limit while driving on company business.

Employees who operate company vehicles during their assigned work or operate their own vehicles in performing their jobs, are financially and legally responsible for any traffic or parking violations incurred while performing their jobs. Employees driving their own vehicle for business purposes are required to maintain adequate insurance at all times at their own expense.

Northern Communications has installed GPS Tracking systems in company vehicles. The data from them will be scrutinized as per the company GPS and Tracking policy, as per above.

Due to various parking issues at company parking lots, employees are able to park company vehicles at their homes. You are responsible for that vehicle and are required to care for the vehicle during non- work hours.

The company vehicles should never be used for transportation to and from social events (i.e. parties, bars, dances, etc.). Our insurance policy covers the use of the vehicle while the employee is on the job or driving to and from the job at a client's location. Failure to abide by the above could mean dismissal from your job.

### **Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace**

No employee will be allowed to work in an impaired state.

This may be impairment by alcohol, by cannabis, by drugs whether prescribed or not, by lack of sleep, or for any other reason.

Should a manager believe that the employee is impaired the employee may be asked to take an unpaid leave of absence until such time as the impairment has passed.

No employee shall possess, consume, sell or transport alcohol or drugs while in the course of his or her duties, including during lunch and/or rest periods or while on Company premises, at Company worksites, or in Company vehicles. Employees will not be permitted to work if they attend work in an impaired state.

The use of alcohol is not permitted on the premises, with the exception of specially organized events that have received authorization in writing from the General Manager. At any Company sanctioned event, drinking and driving will not be tolerated. Northern Communications will make arrangements for transportation for those consuming alcoholic beverages at such events.

All employees are required to notify their managers if they are under a medical program of treatment which requires the consumption of drugs, including medical marijuana, that may cause impairment. Managers shall make an initial assessment of whether the impairment is likely to jeopardize the safety of the employee, co-workers or members of the public.

Northern Communications may require an employee who is using prescription medication, including medical marijuana, to provide proof that such use is necessary and recommended by a qualified medical practitioner for the treatment of a medical condition or disability.

Employees who suspect that they have alcohol or drug dependency are encouraged to seek advice and to follow appropriate treatment. An employee who suffers from drug or alcohol dependency may be entitled to accommodation.

Employees who violate the provisions of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## **Electronic Devices (Personal and Company)**

### Personal Electronic Devices

Personal cell phones and other electronic devices are not to be used during work hours. Since these devices can be a distraction in the workplace, employees must keep any Personal Electronic Devices (PED) in their lockers at all times during work hours. Employees are only permitted to use these devices during their lunch or rest break; however, it must be placed back in storage at the end of the lunch or rest break.

For these purposes, an electronic device will be a GPS or any device that makes or receives telephone calls, leaves messages, sends text messages, surfs the internet or downloads and allows the reading of and responding to e-mails, whether the device is company-supplied or personally owned.

It is critical that there are no **cell phones, cameras or electronic devices** in the Messaging and Emergency Services operations area. There are very strict privacy legislation requirements in Canada and the US that restrict the use of these devices in these areas. We must all abide by these requirements. Employees in these departments have access to confidential information which must be protected in order to mitigate any risk of a breach of confidentiality. It is very unprofessional if employees are using these devices while providing service to our clients.

### Company-Owned Electronic Devices

Northern Communications recognizes that employees may use company-owned electronic communication devices (including cell phones) for personal use. It is required, however, that personal use be limited to non-company time only.

Employees should have no expectation of privacy while using company-owned or company-leased electronic communication devices. Information passing through or stored on company equipment can and will be monitored. Northern Communications also reserves the right to



monitor and review stored data such as internet use, e-mail and instant messaging communications sent or received by users as necessary.

The use of any electronic device is prohibited while operating a vehicle, unless using a hands-free device.

Northern Communications' cell phones, including related hardware, software and accessories are company property and are to be returned the employee's supervisor when the employee commences an extended period of leave or terminates employment.

Employees are expected to use their company-owned devices in an ethical manner at all times.

Inappropriate use of company-owned electronic devices, include:

- Accessing inappropriate information or sites
- Excessive personal use
- Damage or loss due to negligence
- Unauthorized use, including use by other individuals
- Exceeding plan minutes and data

Failure to comply with these regulations and rules may result in disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

Please see the Personal Electronic Device Usage policy for more detailed information.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Emergency Contact information should be updated in the Payworks System and should be given to your manager and the Human Resources/Payroll Office. The name, relationship and phone number of at least one person should be provided. Please ensure that information is current should we need to contact someone in an emergency situation.

## **Employee Expenses**

Where an employee incurs an approved business-related expense in the course of their duties, they will be reimbursed for such expenses provided they have received the approval of their manager to incur the expense(s).

In general, these expenses will include a mileage reimbursement where the employee is required to use their personal vehicle for business purposes, parking costs, taxi fares, hotel accommodation, meals while away on business and any other pre-approved costs associated with business travel.

Mileage for the use of an employee's personal vehicle for business-related purposes will be reimbursed in accordance with the guidelines set out in the federal *Income Tax Act*. Effective January 1, 2014, these rates will be as follows: 40 cents per kilometer. Normally it is more

economical to rent a vehicle and the employee is to determine what is the most economical way. Note that some employees can choose, (with their manager's approval) to use their personal vehicles and be paid the same as if it was a rental. These rates are subject to change.

The maximum per meal is outlined below and includes all taxes and gratuities.

Breakfast	\$12.00
Lunch	\$16.00
Dinner	\$20.00

Standard meal allowances will be prorated for partial days of travel. There may be instances that the employee will not receive the full daily meal allowance. Such examples would include hotel reservations that include a complimentary breakfast. In this event, the employee would be provided a meal allowance of \$36.00 per day for their lunch and dinner. Some training sessions and industry seminars may provide breakfast and lunch, in which case the company will only provide a meal allowance of \$20.00 for their dinner per day. On the day an employee leaves for business travel, the first meal they will be compensated for will be their dinner as they are responsible for their breakfast and lunch as is the case on any other day. Some exceptions may apply. Likewise, if the employee were returning to the office from their trip in the early afternoon, they would only be provided a meal allowance for their breakfast (if complimentary breakfast was not provided by the hotel) and lunch.

For reimbursement of these expenses (with the exception of per diem meal expenses) the employee must submit a completed Expense Report form with receipts to their manager. All related receipts should be attached to the form.

### **GPS Monitoring and Monitoring of Company Property**

Northern Communications is committed to ensure the health and safety of employees, manage productivity, protect and manage company assets and improve customer service with the use of GPS in company vehicles and the monitoring of telecommunication equipment (cell phones, pagers, and computers). Employees must be aware that the tracking technology is being used and that telephone lines, computers and buildings (CCTV) are monitored and/or recorded. This information may be used in evaluating job performance and if necessary, disciplinary action may result.

In some areas of the building, video surveillance is used. The use of video surveillance is for the security of property and management of staff. Any video recorded will be kept for a period of time and then deleted, unless it is necessary to be kept for the purposes of an investigation or for any purpose required by law or by a law enforcement agency. No video will be taken in washrooms.

### **Human Rights**

At Northern Communications, every person has a right to freedom from discrimination and harassment as per the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. Northern Communications prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any of the following grounds:

- Race;
- National or ethnic origin;
- Colour;
- Religion;
- Age;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marital status;
- Family status;
- Gender identity;
- Physical or mental disability (including dependence on alcohol or drugs);
- Pardoned criminal conviction.

Northern Communications is committed to making every reasonable effort to ensure that no individual is subjected to prohibited forms of discrimination in the workplace or provision of services.

### **Employment Equity**

Northern Communications is committed to Employment Equity and in particular to providing equal employment opportunities consistent with the provisions of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

Northern Communications is committed to achieving and maintaining a fair and representative workforce and will initiate employment equity measures to ensure the full participation and advancement of employment of groups which have traditionally been under-represented.

These employment equity measures will include the identification and removal of any discriminatory barriers to the selection, hiring, promotion and training of members of the under-represented groups. Special measures and reasonable accommodations will be implemented, as necessary, to enable members of these groups to compete with others on an equal basis.

### **Insubordination**

Refusing to follow job related instructions, disregarding directions given by managers or other management personnel, insubordination, dishonesty or threats of any kind will NOT be tolerated. If you have a problem with your manager or any member of the management staff, it must be reported to their manager.

### **Office Appearance – Workstations**

In order to provide a safe, pleasant and sanitary place to work, we need everyone's cooperation.

If you are at a “shared” workstation, no personal items should be at your position or on the dividers. If you are the sole user of your workstation, some reasonable amount of professional looking personal items is allowed. Coats, sweaters, etc. are to be hung on the coat rack not on the back of chairs or tossed on an unused desk. Food and beverages are not permitted at work stations.

Any damage or misuse of equipment or property (e.g. writing on desks, walls, keyboards; pictures or equipment) will not be tolerated.

## **Parking**

Northern Communications parking lot is located adjacent to the building in all branches. Employees are asked not to park on the street in front of the building as this area is used for customer parking. There are only a limited number of parking spaces available and they can be used by any staff members on a “first come, first park” basis.

If you are on Northern property (side, ramp, or back) you must have your vehicle license plate registered and you must have a parking tag on your dash.

If you choose to park behind Alder Hall the only place you are allowed to park is in front of the green storage container. Starting at the left front side of the container we have five spots.

If you park anywhere else behind Alder Hall you may be ticketed or “booted”.

You must register your license plate and obtain a tag (free of charge) from the receptionist at the front desk.

The company is not responsible for any loss or damage however caused to anyone’s vehicle on company property.

## **Personal Conduct and Behaviour**

The conduct and behaviour of our employees reflects upon people’s perceptions of Northern Communications. Because of this, Northern Communications requires its employees to exhibit appropriate conduct and professional behaviour when conducting company business.

Inappropriate and unacceptable conduct and behaviour could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination without notice or pay in lieu thereof, depending on the severity of the infraction.

### **Appropriate Conduct and Behaviour includes but is not limited to:**

- Adherence to published policies, practices and procedures;
- Competent performance of all job duties assigned;
- Prompt and regular attendance at work;
- Courtesy to and respect for co-workers, customers, suppliers or any other person who deals with Northern Communications in the conduct of its business;

- Wearing proper business attire and footwear during working hours, appropriate to the job performed,
- Performing appropriate personal hygiene.
- Note that we operate in a “No Scent” environment and as perfume, colognes or other scents may adversely affect others, they will not be allowed.

### **Inappropriate or Unacceptable Conduct and Behaviour**

Includes but is not limited to:

- Loitering or loafing;
- Leaving work early or leaving the department without manager's permission;
- Using obscene, abusive language;
- Spreading malicious gossip or rumours;
- Workplace violence and harassment, threatening, intimidating, or coercing any person at any time;
- Horseplay or throwing objects;
- Reporting to work in an impaired state. This may be impairment by alcohol, by cannabis, by drugs whether prescribed or not, by lack of sleep, or for any other reason;
- Creating or contributing to unsanitary conditions;
- Gambling, lotteries, or any other game of chance while on company premises;
- Insubordination;
- Inappropriate personal use of telephones or computer facilities.
- Possession of guns, weapons or explosives on company property;
- Possession, consumption or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances while on company premises;
- Willful violation of safety rules and procedures;
- Willful neglect and/or mishandling of equipment and machinery;
- Unsafe driving of company vehicles including but not limited to:
  - No talking on a cell phone (without the use of a hands-free device);
  - No texting;
- Theft and/or falsification of company records;
- Indecency;

Inappropriate or Unacceptable Conduct and Behaviour includes but is not limited to:

- Fighting;
- Poor or careless work;
- Sleeping while on duty;
- Accepting gifts, favours or gratuities from firms, organizations, agents, employees, or other individuals who may or do conduct business with Northern Communications with a dollar value in excess of \$50.00.

The workplace includes all locations where business or social activities of the organization are conducted.

### **Progressive Discipline**

Northern Communications believes in encouraging consistent self-discipline and corrective action in the event of undesirable or unacceptable conduct, behaviour, or violations of policies, procedures or standard practice. Where discipline is required, it is the policy of Northern Communications to administer discipline fairly.

Disciplinary action may call for any of five corrective steps - informal counseling, verbal warning, written warning, suspension with or without pay, or termination of employment. The severity of the concern and the number of past occurrences will dictate the corrective steps necessary. Depending on the situation, any of the steps may be repeated, with the exception of termination of employment, or skipped depending on the severity of the matter.

Should a termination be required, the manager of the employee will consult with another manager and/or a third party HR company to confirm that all is being handled appropriately.

### **Reference Checks**

For the purposes of employee reference checks for potential employers Northern Communications will confirm the following information:

- The individual was an employee of Northern Communications.
- The duration of the employment with Northern Communications.
- The employee's current or most recent salary.

All requests for reference should be directed to the Human Resources/Payroll office. Only the Human Resources/Payroll office can provide references for Northern Communications.

### **Scents**

Northern Communications is aware that some persons may have allergies or sensitivities to perfumes, lotions, colognes and / or chemical smells. As a result, we do not allow the use of these products.

### **Smoking**

Northern Communications is a smoke-free workplace. Any employee wishing to smoke shall do so outside the building not closer than nine (9) meters from an entrance. Please be considerate and dispose of your used cigarettes appropriately. Employees are only permitted to smoke during break periods. Smoking is also not permitted in any vehicle owned or leased by Northern Communications. The definition of smoking will include smoking regular cigarettes, electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), cigars, other tobacco products, or marijuana.

### **Social and Professional Networking Sites**

The use of social or professional networking sites such as, but not limited to those listed below, are not permitted during working hours or on company property:

- Facebook
- MySpace

- Pinterest
- Twitter
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- Chat rooms
- Instant messaging

Employees are responsible for the information they post on the Internet. Employees are expected to familiarize themselves with this, and other related policies, to ensure that no inadvertent breach of policy occurs. You must ensure that the company, its customers, stakeholders, vendors, or employees' reputation and goodwill are not damaged by what you post on these networks.

Employees shall not post pictures from the workplace or using equipment from work on social or professional networking sites.

None of the Northern Communications company logos may be posted on the Internet without the expressed permission of the General Manager.

Northern Communications may block access from their computer systems to social networking or other Internet sites at any time, at their sole discretion.

Privacy Policies of Northern Communications, as well as the Confidentiality Agreement signed by all employees as a condition of employment, extend beyond the work activities of employees. In keeping with this, employees are prohibited from disclosing any information on social or professional networking sites that would put them in contravention of those policies or agreements.

Any employee that is aware of a contravention of this policy is expected to report such contravention as soon as possible to your manager.

Any breach of this policy will be investigated by Senior Management. Senior Management may use an investigator that is external to the organization for this purpose, at his/her sole discretion. Any breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **Telephone and Computer Use**

Northern Communications' telephones, internet services, e-mail, computer networks and other electronic devices are intended for the use of serving our customers and in conducting the Company's business.

While Northern Communications recognizes the need for some limited personal usage of telephones and computer networks from time to time on breaks and lunch periods, management would like to discourage personal usage as much as possible. Any personal telephone calls should be kept brief to avoid congestion on the telephone line.

To respect the rights of all employees and avoid miscommunication in the office, employees must inform family members and friends to limit personal telephone calls during working hours. These should be limited to emergency situations.

In some departments, our customers are charged “per minute” or “per call” for time spent on their telephone lines. Making or receiving personal telephone calls on a customer’s account is strictly forbidden and constitutes theft.

Making personal long distance calls on company lines or taking personal calls on our inbound toll free lines also constitutes theft.

Being found guilty of theft may result in immediate dismissal without notice, hence “cause” which means you will not qualify for severance and/or unemployment insurance benefits.

Northern Communications computer systems (including email and internet access) belong to the organization, and are intended for business use only. Emails generated on the system are the property of the Northern Group. Email is a primary method of communication to many of our customers and professionalism must be maintained in all of our communication methods. Please use features such as ‘spell check’ and review your message to ensure it is professional before communicating with someone.

Those using our systems should not have any expectation of privacy. We may, at any time and at our sole discretion, monitor usage and take disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment against any employee’s inappropriate use of our systems.

The following activities are prohibited:

- Using the Internet for illegal activities, or to transmit spam.
- Visiting sites that are considered inappropriate, pornographic or “obscene”. If you connect unintentionally to a site that contains sexually explicit or offensive material, you must disconnect from the site immediately and advise your manager.
- Transmitting chain or threatening letters.

Computer security is a serious concern. Under no circumstances is anyone to download any programs, screen savers etc. onto an office computer without obtaining permission from the IT Manager. In addition, please note that Northern Communications disabled the ability for computers on the network to make use of any mass storage devices (i.e. USB flash drives, portable hard drives, etc.)

For both quality control and liability reasons, management reserves the right to listen to any telephone calls and review any incoming or outgoing e-mails or correspondence of any type. Many of our telephone lines are recorded and our computers are monitored for web and email traffic.

### **Network Passwords**



Password security is a vital part of keeping our network and other systems running efficiently and effectively. It is important to maintain the integrity of our network. In order to achieve this higher level of password security, the implementation of timed password changes are necessary.

We have a mechanism to force password changes every 90 days. As an end-user, you will receive notification of the need to change your password starting 14 days prior to the password expiring. This notification will be displayed each time you logon to the network up until the day the password expires. You will then be required to change your password in order to gain access to your workstation.

### **Password Complexity Requirements:**

Passwords must meet the requirements below.

- Passwords must not contain the entire or part of the users full name or account name.
- Passwords must contain characters from three of the following four categories:
  - o Uppercase characters
  - o Lowercase characters
  - o A number
  - o Special Characters - I.E ~!@#%&\*()\_+=-`~;/?

**Create a Strong Password:** A strong password is 7 or more non-repeating character and contains a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and special characters (examples: ^,\*,\$,-,?") )

Try to avoid using:

- o Words found in a dictionary
- o Significant dates (e.g. birthdays, anniversaries)
- o Names (e.g. spouse, children, pets)
- o Anything else that people would easily associate with you (ex: your favorite sports teams, hobbies, clubs or organizations with which you may be involved)

**Memorize Your Password:** It is important that you memorize your password. Do not tape your password to your monitor, under your keyboard, inside your desk, etc. In fact, after you have practiced typing your password, the only place it should exist is in your head.

Keep in mind that anything done under your username appears to have been done by you. You should protect your password accordingly.

**Account Lock-out Policy:** After 5 unsuccessful password attempts your network account will be locked out for 30 minutes. You will be unable to login even if you enter the correct password until this timer has expired.

**How to Change Your Password:** You may change your password on any Windows XP or Windows 7 workstation (it does not have to be your workstation, any windows computer workstation in Northern Communications network will do)

- o Log onto any Windows XP or Windows 7 workstation

- Press CTL + ALT + DEL
- Click on the Change Password button
- Type in your old password
- Type in your new password and confirm
- Press OK

Please contact the IT department via [ncsit@northerncom.com](mailto:ncsit@northerncom.com) for further information or clarification.

## **Termination and Resignation of Employment**

Should we decide to terminate your employment, including the need for a temporary or permanent layoff, we will comply with all provisions contained in applicable employment legislation, unless otherwise stated in an employment contract or a collective agreement.

If you decide to leave your job, we would appreciate written notice of at least two weeks or longer or as stipulated in an employment contract, and your reason for leaving. You may be asked to participate in an exit interview with an outside third party in order for us to better understand your reasons for leaving and to assist us in improving working conditions for other employees.

An employee shall lose all seniority and their employment shall be deemed to be terminated if they:

- Voluntarily leave the employ of the Employer.
- Are laid off for a period of more than twenty four (24) months.
- Are absent from scheduled work for a period of three (3) or more consecutive days without notifying the Company of such absence and providing a reason satisfactory to the Company.
- Fail to return to work within seven (7) calendar days after being recalled from lay-off by notice sent by registered mail.
- Is absent due to illness or disability or both, and such absence continues more than two (2) years.
- Other valid reasons including but not limited to:
  - Inadequate work performance,
  - Theft or stealing,
  - Disciplinary issues, etc.

## **Visitors**

Generally, personal visitors are discouraged at Northern Communications. Our clients deserve our full attention, and friends and relatives can distract everyone from their work.

NO VISITORS ARE ALLOWED ON THE PREMISES WITHOUT PERMISSION; this ensures the safety of our staff and preserves the confidential nature of our business.

Approved visitors to the building must sign in at the reception desk and will be provided with a visitor badge. Please walk your visitor to back to the reception area at the end of your visit. They will be asked to sign out and return the badge.

Employees of Northern Communications are not to come in to visit before or after their shifts. If you are not working or scheduled to be at work, we ask that you not be in the building.

We are all very proud of where we work, so should you wish to show someone our office, please arrange a brief visit with the manager on duty at the time. Our main concern will be that there will be no distraction or disturbance to others who are working.

### **Workplace Violence Prevention**

Northern Communications is committed to the prevention of workplace violence. We will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect our employees in the workplace from workplace violence, including domestic violence from all sources. Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone and will not be tolerated. Everyone that enters our workplace is expected to uphold our workplace violence prevention policy and to work together to prevent workplace violence. Please refer to the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy for more information.

### **Workplace Harassment**

Northern Communications is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Workplace harassment will not be tolerated from any person in the workplace. All persons that enter our workplace are expected to uphold our policy on workplace harassment.

“Workplace Harassment” is defined as any behaviour that the offender knows, or should reasonably know, is offensive and/or unwelcome.

“Workplace Sexual Harassment” is defined as any conduct, comment, gesture or contact of sexual nature likely to cause offence or humiliation or that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or promotion.

An employee who feels that they have been the victim of harassment in the workplace is advised to first use direct communication with the person engaging in the unwelcome conduct to advise them that this behaviour is not welcome. Once that has been done, they should make their Supervisor aware of what has transpired. Wherever possible, employees are asked to keep a written record of the date, time, details and witnesses of the unwelcome conduct. They should also record notes relating to any conversations they have had with the alleged harasser requesting that the behaviour stop.

If an employee is experiencing harassment in the workplace and is not comfortable approaching the person engaging in the unwelcome behaviour, they are encouraged to report the matter to their Supervisor. That person will then act as a mediator between the parties.

Where the unwanted behaviour continues to occur or it is not considered appropriate to the situation to approach the person engaging in the unwelcome conduct, a formal complaint must be submitted to their Manager containing a brief account of the offensive incident including when and where it occurred, the people involved, and the name(s) of any witnesses to the event. The employee must then ensure that they cooperate with those that are responsible for investigating the complaint.

Upon receiving a formal complaint of harassment, we will investigate the complaint in a timely and professional manner. If either your Supervisor or the General Manager is the alleged harasser, a designated external party will deal with the complaint.

Northern Communications will treat all complaints as confidential and work to protect all complainants and those participating in an investigation from retaliation or reprisal. Information concerning a complaint will not be released to anyone not involved in the investigation.

For more detailed information and the steps to take to report harassment, please refer to the Workplace Harassment Policy.

## Section 3: Employee Benefits

Northern Communications believes in providing fair and equitable benefit plans and programs based on industry practices. This section briefly describes some of the benefits that Northern Communications provides to you, our valued employees.

### Benefits Related To Part-Time Employment

Generally, part-time employees are subject to the same terms and conditions of employment as full-time employees.

Although many benefits apply to both full and part-time employees, some benefits etc. apply to permanent full-time employees only.

### Employee Group Plan

Some permanent full-time employees are entitled to join the Group Insurance plan after the successful completion of the probationary period. Northern Communications currently pays the premiums for staff but does not assume responsibility for payment of the benefit.

The plan includes a significant number of benefits and we encourage you to read the separate **Benefit Plan Booklet** provided by the benefit carrier for the complete details.

Employees having completed their probation period will be provided with an enrolment form to join the benefit plan. This form must be completed within 30 days or the applicant will be considered as a "late applicant". The employee will be required to complete an additional "late applicant" form which will be sent to Industrial Life for assessment. If the late applicant form is not approved by Industrial Alliance, the employee will not be eligible for STD, LTD and Life benefits. Failure to complete the additional form will also void all entitlement of STD, LTD and Life benefits.

Northern Communications is required, in accordance with the benefit contract, to administer the "Spousal Coordination" provision in the health and dental plan. The Spousal Coordination requires any working spouses, eligible for subsidized health and dental insurance through their employer, to enroll in that employer's medical plan.

Note that if an employee and their spouse are both employed in permanent full-time positions at Northern Communications and eligible for benefits with family coverage, they can submit under both individuals and the plan will be coordinated to achieve a co-pay to a maximum of 100% for health and dental claims.

Note that the premium for this plan is based on usage. If the usage increases, the premium increases as well. In reality the company pays the entire cost incurred here plus the benefit company's administrative costs and has a limited budget to do so. If we all are careful in the amount we spend here and spend it wisely this plan should continue to be available.

As an example, when you go to a pharmacy to fill a prescription, the local dispensing fees range from a low of \$4.40 to a high of \$11.99 for the pharmacist to do the same job. In addition if you have a prescription that runs for a number of months and you get it filled once rather than three times, only one dispensing fee will apply. This is in your control!

### **Employee Assistance Program**

Employees enrolled in the group benefits plan will have access to an Employee Assistance Program - LifeWorks. LifeWorks is a benefit provided by Northern Communications at no additional cost and is completely confidential. Whether you need help with a work-related issue or a personal or family problem, you can turn to LifeWorks for support and assistance with issues of everyday life, and for access to a wealth of resources. For more information please visit the Shared Drive – S:\Employee Information Folder\Employee Assistance Program.

### **Continuation of Benefits While on Leave**

Notwithstanding the above, continuation of benefits is only possible where permitted by the insurer and provided that the eligibility requirements of the plan are met. Where these conditions are not met, benefits will not be continued.

During legislated leaves of absences, Northern Communications will continue benefit coverage, subject to the eligibility requirements of the applicable insurance carrier. Northern Communications will continue benefits for the legislated duration of the leave.

Northern Communications will continue benefits for employees who are currently off work and receiving WSIB benefits, for up to 24 months from the date of the injury or illness. For employees who are on LTD, benefits will be continued for up to 12 months from the date of the injury or illness.

Employees who are away from work on approved personal leaves of absence which are scheduled to exceed 4 weeks will be temporarily removed from the company's benefits plan for the duration of such leave. The employee's benefits will stop on the last day of work and will continue once the employee returns to work.

### **Registered Retirement Savings Plan**

All employees may participate in a group RRSP through payroll deductions. Your RRSP contributions will be remitted on your behalf however the company will not match these contributions. Contributions must be at least \$25.00/per bi-weekly pay. This service is a convenience only.

It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that all governing contributions to RRSP's and the Pension Plan or combination of both, as set out in the Income Tax Act, are observed.

### **Subsidized Retirement Plan**

Permanent full-time employees are eligible for enrollment in the subsidized RRSP plan after one year of service. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform their manager if they would like

to participate in this program and to ensure they are receiving the correct percentage (as per the chart below).

The company will equally match employee's contributions to the maximum as per below.

You may contribute to the Plan by payroll deduction in an amount up to a percentage of your earnings as outlined in the following scale:

<b>Years of Continuous Service</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One year but less than 4 years	2%
4 years but less than 8 years	3%
8 years or more	4%

### **Education Assistance Program**

Northern Communications wishes to encourage employees to continually upgrade and develop their skills and knowledge through taking courses.

Northern Communications offers reimbursement of tuition fees and other expenses as follows:

- If the course is Directly job related - 100%
- If the course is Slightly job related - 50%
- If the course is Not job related - 25%

The maximum amount that will be provided to any employee under the Education Assistance Program is \$250 per fiscal year (September 1 to August 31).

All courses require pre-approval from the General Manager.

Reimbursement of funds is provided when proof of successful program completion and a receipt from the payment of the course have been provided to your manager. Northern Communications may, as a condition of reimbursement, require an employee to agree to a defined minimum length of service by entering into a Return of Service Agreement or require the employee to train other employees on the material learned.

### **Leaves of Absences**

Northern Communications is committed to assisting employees respond to individual situations by providing Leave of Absences. All leaves must be approved by Management in order to ensure that business operations will not be significantly affected. In the case of illness/injury, the appropriate forms will be issued to the employee on receipt of the department managers' email request. No request for leave will be unduly denied. If a leave has merit and can be accommodated, Northern Communications will do so. Employees who are away from work on an approved leave are expected to maintain communication and contact with Management. Northern Communications reserves the right to contact employees and maintain regular communication through the duration of the leave.

When an employee returns to work after an authorized Leave of Absence, they will be returned to their former position. If that position is unavailable or no longer exists, the employee will be reinstated to a comparable position at a similar wage. Employees should provide an expected return date to their manager and notify the manager as soon as possible if there are changes to the return date. For further information on any of these leaves, please consult with a manager.

### 1. Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death of an immediate family member, all employees who have completed their probationary period shall be granted up to 3 consecutive days without loss of regular pay for scheduled hours. The 3 days must be taken immediately following the date of the death or including the day of the death, or on any other such days that may be agreed upon by the employee and his/ her manager, whichever is applicable.

Employees who have not completed their probationary period shall be granted up to three 3 days without pay.

For the purposes of bereavement leave, "immediate family" is defined as father, mother, spouse, child, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, guardian or step parent. The relationships specified here are deemed to include a common-law spouse and a partner of the same sex.)

Where an employee chooses not to attend or is unable due to distance of travel or some other reason to attend the funeral of a member of his immediate family, they shall be entitled to leave for mourning on the day of the funeral without loss of regular straight time earnings to which they would otherwise have been entitled on that day.

### 2. Compassionate Care Leave

All employees are eligible to receive up to 28 weeks to provide care or support to a family member if a medical doctor or nurse practitioner issues a certificate stating that the family member has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

A "family member" is an individual related to an employee whose relationship is described under the Employment Insurance program. The relationship can include, but not limited to, a spouse or common-law partner, a child, a parent or any other person who is prescribed under the Employment Insurance Act.

### 3. Critical Illness Leave

There are two types of leaves related to critical illness:

- An employee, who is a family member of a critically ill child, is eligible to take up to 37 weeks of leave to provide care or support to the child. A "critically ill child" is a person under 18 years of age, on the day the leave begins, whose health has changed and whose life is at risk as a result of an illness or injury (as defined under the Employment Insurance Regulations); and



- An employee, who is a family member of a critically ill adult, is eligible to take up to 17 weeks of leave to provide care or support to the adult. A “critically ill adult” is a person of 18 years of age or more, on the day the leave begins, whose health has changed and whose life is at risk as a result of an illness or injury (as defined under the Employment Insurance Regulations).

In order to be entitled to this leave, an employee must have completed at least 6 consecutive months of employment with Northern Communications. Employee must give written notice, as soon as possible, to their manager. The notice must advise the manager of the reason(s) for the leave and the intended length of the leave.

#### 4. Jury Duty and Attendance at Court

If an employee is required to serve as a juror or required to attend the court of law as a Crown Witness, Northern Communications shall compensate them for time lost from work for such service at their regular rate of pay up to a maximum of two (2) weeks. In consideration of this the employee agrees to turn over to the Employer any monies paid to them for such service exclusive of mileage, accommodation and meal allowance.

#### 5. Leave Related to the Death or Disappearance

Employees who have worked for the company for at least 6 consecutive months are entitled to take up to 52 weeks of leave in the case of a missing child (under 18 years of age) and up to 104 weeks of leave if the child has died. An employee is not entitled to the leave if the employee is charged with the crime or it is probable, considering the circumstances, that the child was a party to the crime.

For the purposes of this leave, a “parent” is defined as:

- A parent of a child;
- The spouse or common-law partner of a parent of a child;
- A person with whom a child has been placed for the purposes of adoption;
- The guardian or foster parent of a child; or
- A person who has the care, custody or control of a child, and is considered to be like a close relative, whether or not they are related by blood or adoption.

#### 6. Maternity Leave

Maternity Leave is available for pregnant employees that have worked with Northern Communications for at least 6 consecutive months. Employees are entitled to up to 17 weeks of unpaid maternity leave. Maternity leave may be taken any time during the period that begins 13 weeks before the expected date of delivery and ends 17 weeks after the actual delivery date. You must provide Northern Communications with a medical certificate confirming your pregnancy. Please submit this letter to your manager.

An employee wishing to take a Maternity Leave must provide at least 2 weeks written notice to their manager stating the date when the leave will commence. A request for maternity leave will never be denied.

## 7. Parental/Adoption Leave

Parental/Adoption Leave provides an unpaid leave to all employees who have completed at least 6 months of continuous employment with Northern Communications and are the parent of a new child. Employees are entitled to receive up to 63 weeks which may be taken any time during the 78 week period starting the day the child is born, or comes into the custody or care of the employee.

Employees are responsible for providing at least 2 weeks of written notice when requesting a parental/adoption leave.

### **During and after Maternity and Parental/Adoption Leave**

During maternity and parental/adoption leaves, if applicable, Northern Communications will continue to pay the premiums for the group benefit plan (medical and dental coverage).

Sick leave credits are not accumulated during this leave. After this leave has been completed, an employee will be reinstated in the same position held prior to the leave, or with a valid reason, in a comparable position. The employee will also receive the similar wages and benefits as received before the leave. The time entitled and the procedures etc. to be followed by Northern Communications will be according to the Canada Labour Code.

## 8. Reservist Leave

Employees who are military reservists are entitled to a leave without pay from their civilian employment to take part in annual training or in certain operations in Canada or abroad that are designated by the Minister of National Defence. Reservists must have a minimum 6 months continuous employment with the company in order to be eligible for the leave.

Employees are entitled to up to 15 days of leave for annual training. There is no specified time limit for leave while a reservist takes part in a designated operation or is called out for service.

Employees must provide 4 weeks written notice of the day on which they will begin the leave (unless there is a valid reason for not doing so and must advise the company of the duration of the leave. Upon return from leave, the employee will be reinstated to the same position if it still exists or to a comparable position if it does not.

## 9. Personal Leave of Absence

Should none of the other types of leave apply; an employee may request to take an unpaid Personal Leave of Absence. The approval of a Personal Leave of Absence will be judged on its merit with consideration to the potential impact on the Company's operations. The decision to approve or deny a Personal Leave of Absence is the sole discretion of the employee's Manager. Employees who are approved for Personal Leaves of Absence are not entitled to company Benefits while on leave.

## **Sick Pay**

Paid sick leave is designed to provide income security for employees who are ill or injured. Full time employees with an average of 40 hours per week who have passed their probationary period may qualify for up to eight (8) days of paid sick leave annually. This is calculated at a rate of 3.08% of eligible hours (regular worked, overtime worked, stat, bereavement, vacation) to a maximum of 64 hours in a year.

Employees are required to talk to their manager when calling in sick. Management of Northern Communications may, at their sole discretion, require an employee to provide medical documentation to verify absences from work.

Sick leave credits are accrued annually beginning with the first Pay Day in January to the last Pay Day in December of the calendar year. (Same as T4s)

Sick leave credits must be accrued before they are used. Accumulated credits may not be carried over from year to year. Any sick leave credits accrued and not taken in one year will be paid out the following year at a rate of 50%.

## **Short Term Disability**

Employees are required to use all accrued paid sick days prior to receiving STD benefits. For STD applications, supporting medical documentation must be received within 7 days or the file may be closed.

Employees who are Totally Disabled due to non-work related accident, illness or disability and are unable to perform the essential duties of their own occupation are eligible to apply for STD coverage. For detailed information regarding the process, qualification and responsibilities, please view the Employee Group Benefits Information Booklet and the STD Process Flow Chart located in the Employee Information Folder on the Shared Drive.

While off on STD, employees must communicate with their manager on a bi-weekly basis or on another mutually agreed time frame. Should documentation or communication be requested and not provided within 7 days, the employee may be scheduled for work. Employees who fail to show up for 3 consecutive work days will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned their employment, and as a result, their benefits will be terminated effective immediately.

## **Long Term Disability**

Where a full-time employee is absent due to a disability, and is on long-term disability for a period of twenty-four (24) months from the time the disability or illness commence, the Manager will connect with the employee to determine his/her ability to return to work with accommodations.

While off on LTD, employees must communicate with their manager on a monthly basis or on another mutually agreed time frame.

If it is determined that return to work is unlikely or improbably and no accommodation is reasonable within the employer's duty to accommodate, then the employee will be deemed terminated in accordance with the Canada Labour Code, providing such termination does not violate the Human Rights Code.

### **Statutory Holidays**

Northern Communications recognizes nine (9) days as statutory holidays and grants employees time off work on these days for which the employee is paid Holiday Pay. The recognized holidays are:

New Year's Day (Jan 1)	Labour Day (1st Monday in Sept)
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day (2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday in Oct)
Victoria Day (2 <sup>nd</sup> last Monday in May)	Christmas Day (Dec 25)
Canada Day (July 1)	Boxing Day (Dec 26)
Civic Holiday (1st Monday in Aug)	

Note that the "Civic Holiday" in August is a substitute for Remembrance Day (November 11) and that since "Family Day" is an Ontario holiday and we are a federally regulated company we do not recognize that day as a statutory holiday.

In order to be eligible for Holiday Pay, an employee must have worked at Northern Communications for a period longer than thirty (30) days.

Employees covered by the Canada Labour Code are entitled to payment for Statutory Holidays according to the Code. For most employees, their holiday pay will be equal to at least one twentieth (1/20th) of the wages, excluding overtime pay that they earned in the four-week period immediately before the week in which the general holiday occurs.

Employees who are required to work on a statutory holiday shall be paid, in addition to the holiday pay for that day, at a rate equal to at least one and one-half times their regular rate of wages for the time worked on that day.

When a statutory holiday falls on a non-working day, an employee may be granted either the last working day before or after the holiday, or some other chosen day off with the appropriate entitlement pay. Northern Communications management will determine which day is given.

### **Vacations**

Vacations are one of the nice things to look forward to each year. Our vacation year is based on the period January 1st to December 31st. In order to determine your vacation entitlement, we have provided the following guidelines:

- Vacations with pay will be granted in accordance with the employees' length of service.
- Employees must complete one year of employment prior to taking vacation.

- In the first “partial” year you are hired, vacation pay accrues at a rate of 4% of total gross earnings starting from date hired. The amount accrued is what is available in the subsequent calendar year.

Following that, an employee’s vacation will accrue with completed years of service as follows:

Employees who have completed one year’s service with the Company shall receive an annual vacation of two (2) weeks with pay at the rate of four percent (4%) of their gross earnings during the previous year.

Employees who have completed five (5) years but less than ten (10) years of service shall receive an annual vacation of three (3) weeks with pay at the rate of six percent (6%) of their gross annual earnings during the previous year.

All Employees who have completed ten (10) years but less than fifteen (15) years of service shall receive an annual vacation of four (4) weeks with pay at the rate of eight percent (8%) of their gross earnings during the previous year.

Employees who have completed fifteen (15) years or more of service shall receive an annual vacation of five (5) weeks with pay at the rate of ten percent (10%) of their gross earnings during the previous year.

Requests for Vacation shall be done in writing or by email to the employee’s Manager. The scheduling of vacations is done on a first-come, first-served basis. Where all other factors are equal, the Manager will give preference to vacation requests in order of the employee's length of service with Northern Communications. Vacation scheduling will be the duty of each Manager. Vacation requests will not be denied, unless the Manager feels that granting it would have a negative effect on operations or if essential services would not be covered. In special circumstances it may be required to cancel vacations and reschedule them at an alternate time if essential services would not be covered.

Except in unusual pre-approved circumstances, a vacation is to be taken in the calendar year immediately following the completion of the year of employment in which it was earned. For each five scheduled work days employees are on vacation, one week will be deducted from their vacation bank.

Statutory Holidays occurring during your vacation will not be counted as days of vacation, unless you are paid both holiday and vacation pay for the holiday day.

All accrued vacation should be taken each year. However, at a minimum, employees are required to take at least two (2) weeks’ vacation.

***\*Should any policy be in conflict with a collective agreement covering an employee, that employee shall follow the provisions of their collective agreement***

“Perks”

In addition to our regular remuneration package, benefits, sick days, pension etc. the company also provides the following to employees in good standing once they have completed their probationary period:

1. Rogers Discount
  - a. Northern Communications Employees may be eligible for a special offer from Rogers  
[S:\Employee Information\Rogers cellular employee discount - Beyond Wireless.pdf](#)
2. Free filtered water
  - a. Compared to purchasing at \$2.00 a day, this has a potential value of about \$500.00 per year per employee.
3. Free parking
  - a. Some companies either provide no parking or charge their employees. At \$50.00 per month this has a potential value of \$300.00 per year per employee.
4. Free pager
  - a. Rental Pagers start at \$15.95 per month. This has a potential value of about \$200.00 per year per employee.
  - b. The employee is responsible for returning all equipment to the Company in good working condition upon termination of employment or upon discontinuation of the paging service.
5. Free Voice mail account
  - a. Voice Mail accounts start at \$15.95 per month. This has a potential value of about \$200.00 per year per employee.
6. Free alarm monitoring
  - a. Residential Alarm monitoring has a retail rate of about \$23.95 per month. This has a potential value of about \$287.00 per year per employee.  
*\* free employee alarm services will continue in conjunction with benefits while an employee is on leave, and may be terminated in accordance to the timelines outlined for benefits continuation.*
7. Discounted Alarm equipment
  - a. Is provided at cost. The value of this depends on what is purchased. Employees who wish to purchase discount alarm equipment must pay the invoice, in-full, at the time of purchase.
8. Annual Christmas or Staff Appreciation party
  - a. At all our staff parties, everyone seems to have a good time. These events cost the company about \$75.00 per person.
  - b. We also have a children's Christmas party and provide gifts for employee children.
9. The company will pay on a graduated scale the cost of some educational courses.

- a. The value here depends on the type and number of courses taken.
10. The company sponsors two staff children sport teams to the value of \$250.00 each per year.
11. We have a “Fun Committee” where the company provides a “fund” for various activities as determined by the staff. (Summer party, pizza day, etc.)
12. The company buys season tickets to sports games and makes them available to staff.
  - a. The value here depends on the number of games attended.
13. Employee Referral Program
  - a. If you refer someone who is hired and who completes their probationary period with the Northern Group, you receive a day off with pay!
  - b. If the referred employee remains at the Northern Group for more than one year, (not off on a leave of absence more than five days, disability leave, maternity leave, etc.) you receive \$250.00. The bonus is paid through payroll.
  - c. Both employees (you and the one you referred) must remain in good standing in order to receive the paid days off and/or the referral payout.
  - d. Employees are responsible for notifying the manager prior to the candidate being interviewed that you have referred them.

## Section 4: Health & Safety

Please submit all Health and Safety issues and inquiries to: [healthandsafety@northerncom.com](mailto:healthandsafety@northerncom.com)

### Employer Duties

Northern Communications is committed to ensure that the health and safety of every employee is protected while they are at work. It is the policy of Northern Communications to comply with legislative requirements to make our plants and offices safe places to work.

Northern Communications will:

- Strive to eliminate any foreseeable hazards, which may result in personal injuries or illnesses, fires, security losses, property damage and accidents.
- Take reasonable care to ensure that employees are made aware of every known or foreseeable health or safety hazard in the area they are working in.
- Provide training to all employees in the recognition and correction of hazards and the proper use, handling, and storage of hazardous materials along with the proper use of any personal protective equipment, safety materials, or devices which may be used in our facilities.
- Ensure that vehicles, mobile equipment, buildings and structures employees use or work in meet prescribed standards.
- Investigate, record and report all accidents, occupational diseases and other known hazardous occurrences as outlined in the legislation.
- Post a copy of the Health and Safety policy, a copy of the legislation, and any other related material in an accessible place.
- Will provide support and work with the Joint Health and Safety Committee(s) and ensure the committee members receive training and are aware of their responsibilities.
- Ensure that all other employer responsibilities are adhered to as outlined in the Federal legislation.

### Employee's Responsibilities

All Northern Communications employees will ensure they:

- Review and become familiar with their responsibilities and comply with all instructions in respect to health and safety as outlined in the Company policies.
- Use any required personal protective equipment, safety materials or devices intended for their protection.
- Take reasonable and necessary precautions to ensure their health and safety along with their fellow employees and cooperate with Northern Communications and JHSC representatives.
- Assist in identifying and eliminating hazards, minimizing accidents, working safely at all times, and following procedures necessary for the protection of all.



Loss prevention is the direct responsibility of all who are associated with Northern Communications. No job is so important and no service is so urgent that we cannot take time to perform our work safely.

Through cooperation and the full acceptance of the responsibility to consider health and safety in every activity, we will be able to ensure that Northern Communications is and remains a safe place to work.

Management of Northern Communications is vitally interested in the health and safety of its employees. Protection of employees from injury or occupational disease is a major and continuing objective. All employees – be it managers or workers – must be dedicated to the continuing objective of reducing the risk of injury.

### **Accident and Injury Reporting**

It is essential to immediately report all injuries and accidents, as well as any potential hazards in the workplace, to your Supervisor, no matter how minor they may seem. By reporting to your Supervisor, steps can be taken to prevent future injury to people, and damage to equipment and property.

The supervisor will be responsible for completing the necessary first aid/accident report and investigating the incident as required.

Completed reports must be signed by the employee and the person who completed them. A copy of the completed report will be provided to the employee for their own records.

The completed report must then be provided to the Human Resources/Payroll Office who will be responsible for reporting the incident, where required, within the timeframe required by legislation.

### **Fire Procedures**

All Northern Communications employees must be aware of the fire procedures and/or evacuation plan to follow in the event of a fire emergency in their office.

Each office has its own list of procedures to follow in case of a fire. All employees are responsible for reading and knowing these procedures. Fire extinguishers are located throughout the buildings to extinguish minor fires.

The alarm monitoring station/dispatch centre walls are designed to withstand fire for a period of two (2) hours. Because this area deals with matters of life and death its employees should not evacuate for minor fires in areas outside the monitoring station. They therefore have their own procedures to follow in case of a fire.

Employees that have a disability, whether permanent or temporary, and may need help during an emergency, must let their immediate manager know. The manager will work with the employee

to develop an individualized emergency response that will meet the employee's needs in an emergency situation.

For more information on the Health and Safety program at the Northern Group of Companies, please see the Health and Safety Policy.

## Section 5: Community Involvement

A percentage from the proceeds from the all the services and/or equipment that we provide is donated back to the community and to various helping charities.

We have made contributions to each of the organizations and causes that are listed below. Together, we are making a difference in the communities we live and do business in.

- N.E.O. Regional Cancer Centre
- Canadian Children Burn Victims
- The Canadian Red Cross
- United Way
- Send A Kid To Camp (Manitoulin Children's Foundation)
- Our Children Our Future
- Timmins Police Association
- Canadian Deaf Sports
- Canadian Hard Of Hearing
- Timmins Street Reach
- North Bay Big Brothers
- Sudbury Real Estate Board Annual Christmas Dinner
- The Canadian Hearing Society
- Native People of Sudbury Development Corp.
- The Children's Aid Society
- Better Beginnings Better Futures
- Sudbury Theatre Centre
- Direct donation to a North Bay young girl for medical assistance
- All Nations Church (Easter Children's Play)
- Timmins Paul Royter Show
- Alzheimer Society
- Club Richelieu
- Police Retirees (Garden Brothers Circus)
- Kids Show (Timmins)
- Sudbury Regional Hospital
- Send a child burn victim to camp
- Send a diabetic child to camp
- Strokes For Hope (North Eastern Cancer Centre)
- North Bay Fire Department
- The Hospital Activity Book For Children
- Canadian Special Olympics
- Chip In For Charity (Sudbury Regional Hospital)
- YMCA Annual Giving Fund
- The Samaritan Centre
- Breast Cancer Research
- Lions Club Timmins
- Children of staff sports sponsorships
- North Bay Police Association Children's Handbook
- Sudbury Multicultural/Folk Arts Association
- Say No To Drugs Handbook For Schools
- Ontario Law Enforcement Torch Run For Special Olympics (Timmins)
- The Salvation Army
- The Children's Aid Society

## Section 6: Communication

### Privacy Policy

The privacy of individuals connected with our business, including our customers, contractors, employees, and website visitors has always been of great importance to Northern Communication Services Inc. Keeping personal information in strict confidence is a cornerstone of our business. Regardless of how the range of products and services we offer our customers expands, and the technology we use changes, we will always strive to protect the privacy of personal information, subject to any consent an individual has provided for its use.

This policy describes the principles on which Northern Communication Services Inc. and its subsidiaries will protect the privacy of personal information. The policy is based on the Canadian Standards Association Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information. This policy is part of Northern Communications Services' commitment to ensure that all personal information of individuals in its possession is protected and used in accordance with the law. Privacy laws across Canada are evolving, and therefore this policy is subject to change.

Personal Information is any information about an identifiable person, other than business contact information including an employee's name, title, business address and business telephone number or email. It includes such things as a person's home address, date of birth, social insurance number, medical records, employment and financial information. With respect to customers, such information is collected primarily in connection with services and products provided by Northern Communications Services. Employees may be asked to provide such information to Northern Communications Services in connection with matters relating to their employment. In all cases, Northern Communications Services is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals and the integrity of their personal information.

Employees may request access to review their general employee information records. No material contained in an employee's records may be removed from the file and a member of Management will be present during the viewing of the file.

Concerns or complaints related to privacy issues must be made, in writing, to the Privacy Officer setting out the details of the concern or complaint. The Privacy Officer shall investigate the matter forthwith and make a determination related to the resolution of the concern(s) or complaint(s).

To see the complete policy you can go to: <http://www.northerncom.com/privacy2.php>

### Internal Privacy Policy

Northern Communication Services collects information from its clients in order to provide them with the services they require, to invoice them for services and to contact them for collection purposes. Information may also be used to make clients aware of products and services that may be of interest to them and to send newsletters. We respect the privacy of our clients and do not collect any unnecessary information.

Under no circumstances are employees to share information about our clients with anyone outside the company unless the services that they have contracted us to provide require us to do so. Should authorities request information about a client the request is to be passed on to Mike Shantz or John Whitehead and only they may decide if the information required will be shared.

Any employee who is found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination for cause.

### **Open-Door Policy**

Northern Communications encourages input from all employees. Should you have an idea or suggestion on how we can improve our processes, improve employee relations, or improve customer service, please do not hesitate to meet with a member of Northern Communications' Management Team to discuss your ideas. We place great value on the input of our employees. If you discuss something with your manager and feel that the situation has not been properly resolved, feel free to go to their manager and so on up the organizational chart.

### **Dispute Resolution**

Northern Communications' problem-solving and dispute resolution process provides a vehicle by which employees may lodge complaints or express concerns to management about their employment relationships with Northern Communications, or on other issues.

Should you have any concerns or disputes with any person associated with Northern Communications, we encourage you to take your concerns to your immediate Manager, or failing that, any other member of the Management Team.

Employees who express any concerns, or lodge a formal complaint under this policy, or who provide information regarding a complaint under this policy may do so without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

Northern Communications believes in resolving employee concerns and disputes, related to their employment relationship, in a prompt and equitable manner.

### **Business Communications**

The official language of business at Northern Communications is English. While we serve clients in many other languages, all business correspondence and communications both internal and external are normally conducted in English. Within this context, during regular business operations, meetings, correspondence and conversations with employees, management, clients and suppliers are normally conducted in English. Employees are free to communicate in the language of their choice during breaks and lunch. In order to maintain and promote a fair, inclusive and respectful workplace, employees are encouraged to converse in English when in the presence of colleagues, supervisors, or clients, particularly when the other party does not understand the language that is being spoken. Exceptions to this policy obviously apply in situations where we are providing services to a client in their language of choice.

## Handbook Updates

This Handbook and the Company Policies document may be revised from time to time. It is the employee's responsibility to keep up to date on any changes to the employee handbook and Company policies. Employees are encouraged to approach management should they have any questions or concerns. All amendments in the handbook will have a revision date on them. Should you have printed a copy please ensure that you have the most current version.

This document is available online in our internal Intranet.

## Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct outlines the standards governing the conduct of all staff of Northern Communication Services Inc. (NCS). It is based on the following values:

- Excellence in service to the public.
- Fairness and respect for human rights and the dignity of all people.
- Accountability.

### Professional Excellence:

- I strive for excellence, efficiency, accuracy and reliability in the performance of work related activities.
- I operate within the parameters of my job roles and responsibilities, while recognizing my skills, knowledge, and areas of competence.
- I keep abreast of developments in my fields, and endeavor to improve and expand my skills and competencies.
- I will act in accordance with Canadian laws; I do not participate in or condone dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

### Personal Integrity:

- I represent accurately the professional qualifications, affiliations, education, skills, and accomplishments of the individual and/or of NCS.
- I take individual responsibility and credit only for work actually performed by myself, or to which I have contributed.
- I will refrain from exploitative relationships particularly where there is an imbalance of power.
- I will not work impaired in anyway and I will abstain from use of substances (i.e., alcohol or drugs) when at work or participating in other work-related activities, with the exception of substances taken for medical purposes if they do not impair functioning.

### Responsibility to Clients and Customers:

- I believe that our clients have the right and capacity to determine their own needs and how they will get them met, and work to support this end.

- I will help clients/customers in a non-judgmental and non-partisan way, without stigmatization or bias. All are served equally and with dignity, regardless of race, age, religion, gender, sexual preference, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs, marital status, or disability.
- I will employ a friendly, courteous, respectful, empathetic, and professional manner in providing service.
- I aim to communicate clearly to ensure mutual comprehension, asking relevant, clarifying questions that promote understanding of service needs.
- I maintain confidentiality except when disclosure is compelled by law; identifying when written or electronic information is protected.

Responsibility to Colleagues:

- I treat colleagues with consideration and respect, appreciating differences in opinion and styles of working. I will not tolerate discrimination, workplace violence or harassment, unwarranted negative criticism, or any kind of abuse.
- I work cooperatively and supportively to advance the services and objectives of NCS.
- I acknowledge the work and contributions made by others.
- I strive for good communication and clear understanding of expectations.
- I maintain confidentiality with respect to personal information about my colleagues.

Responsibility to Northern Communications:

- I provide service consistent with Northern Communications mission statement, philosophy, and goals as determined by the board and /or management.
- I support and uphold Northern Communications reputation in the community.
- I do not use my positions in association with Northern Communications for personal gain. I will acknowledge conflicts of interest and voluntarily withdraw from any such situations.
- I treat the workplace and Northern Communications property in a respectful and non-wasteful manner.
- I recognize that materials prepared in the course of employment or association with Northern Communications is the property of the Company.
- I uphold confidentiality with respect to the maintenance, storage, retrieval, use, and disposition of Northern Communications information, files, and materials.

I understand that this Employee Handbook document will be updated on an occasional basis and agree to keep the various sections in it up to date.

I have read this entire Employee Handbook and all the various sections and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained within it.

## Appendix “A” Document History

This manual will have individual pages updated on an occasional basis.

If you are looking at it electronically it will be correct and have the right page numbers in the table of contents.

For environmental reasons we do not reprint the entire document should a page be inserted or deleted.

If you are looking at a paper copy you should check the “History” page and the last updated date of the individual page that you are interested in.

<b>Change and Page #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
Drugs and alcohol in the workplace p. 23	March 5, 2018	Updates to policy	Gabrielle, Michelle
Employment Equity p.27	April 25, 2018	Company’s commitment to Employment Equity	Gabrielle, Michelle
Education Assistance Program p.39	April 26, 2018	Increase in education assistance program	Gabrielle, Michelle
Vacation Pay p.45	July 12, 2018	Removed reference to Vacation Pay for commission salesmen	Grant Dussiaume
Drugs and Alcohol in the Workplace p.23	October 17, 2018	Updates to policy	Grant Dussiaume
Inappropriate or Unacceptable Conduct and Behaviour p.29	October 17, 2018	Updates to policy	Grant Dussiaume
Progressive Discipline p.30	October 17, 2018	Added requirement for managers to consult with other managers and HR.	Grant Dussiaume
Personal Integrity p.54	October 17, 2018	Added “I will not work impaired in anyway and” to the final point.	Grant Dussiaume