Removing Data from a Mobile Device

If the phone is from the Universities preferred provider, the individual should inquire within their department to see if any other faculty or staff member can use the cell phone. Department heads may wish to hold onto deactivated phones from preferred provider to serve as backup for lost or broken phones, or for staff who need a new phone.

If the department cannot identify a business need for the old cell phone the device should be sent to the Campus Surplus Program for proper disposal. University Cell phones that are turned over to Campus Surplus for disposal must be properly sanitized to delete and erase all information from the phone.

If you use a mobile device with a wireless carrier (e.g. cell phone, smart phone, tablet) or not (e.g. tablet, iPod) for university business and are no longer going to use the device, whether the University or you own the device, the data residing on the device must be securely removed to prevent unauthorized disclosure of the data per the University’s Data & Media Sanitization Policy. Please note if it is a University owned device and is no longer going to be used by you, you must follow the University’s Cell Phone Disposal procedure.

Many options are available for reuse or disposal of University cell phones which are old or no longer needed. While cell phones are currently specific to the service provider you utilize, your number can be removed from the phone and replaced with another number from the same provider.

Before disposing of a university cell phone in any manner the department must remove all personal information and data -- such as contact names and phone numbers, notes, calendars, documents, etc. -- from the device.

Mobile devices can store data in many ways. It depends on the type of device, the operating system and sometimes the wireless carrier. Below are three ways:

1. Stored on the device in internal memory or storage.
2. Secure Digital (SD) or Micro SD card. Generally Android, Blackberry and Windows devices have the capability of having a SD or Micro SD card installed to add more memory to the device.
3. On the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card. AT&T and T-Mobile use SIM cards.

To make sure you are in compliance with University policy we recommend the following steps below or visit [http://www.wikihow.com/Delete-Cell-Phone-Memory](http://www.wikihow.com/Delete-Cell-Phone-Memory).

1. Back-up and/or transfer important data.
   
   Use the software that comes with your device to backup and/or transfer important files to your new phone or temporarily to your computer. This includes pictures, documents, books, applications and other media.

2. Perform a secure method of erasing the data on the device itself.
   
   This can be achieved by returning your device to original factory settings. Because there are different operating systems, there are different ways to perform this. Just deleting information or using a “clear” option is not a secure method for erasing data. Below are some methods on how to securely erase the data in the most popular operating systems. Operating system updates happen a lot so always refer to your operating system, device manufacturer’s support site or your wireless carrier if it is not listed below.

   • **Google’s Android**: A factory data reset can generally be done by going to Menu> Settings > Privacy > Factory data reset. Conversely, you can also dial, if your device is a smart phone, *2767*3855# which will cause the phone to power off and then power back on in a factory reset. There is some inconsistency with how certain Android phones react to the dial reset, so it may not completely wipe some phones. Also keep in mind that rooted Android smartphones may react unpredictably to a factory data reset. The Android operating system and the
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devices it runs on vary from hardware manufacturer and wireless carrier, so if this does not work for you please refer your owner’s manual, Google’s Android or device manufacturer’s support site, or your wireless carrier.

- **Apple’s iOS:** A factory data reset can generally be done by going to Settings > General > Reset > Erase All Content and Settings. This applies to iPhones, iPads and iPods. You can also perform a factory data reset by connecting your device to a computer using iTunes. In the source list, click on the device, then click on the Summary tab and choose Restore. You will then have the option to restore to a backup copy of your device or “Setup as a new phone.” Choose to setup as a new phone and all data will be wiped.

- **Blackberry:** Varies depending on the version of the operating system on the device. In general you can restore the device to factory settings by selecting Options > Security or Security Options > Security Wipe. If this does not work for you please refer to your owner’s manual, Blackberry support site or your wireless carrier.

- **Microsoft’s Windows Phone:** Go to Settings > About > Reset Phone. There are other methods to perform a hard reset using physical buttons (volume and camera buttons, for instance), but they vary based on manufacturer and model, so you’ll need to refer to your owner’s manual, Microsoft’s or device manufacturer’s support site or your wireless carrier.

3. Remove or erase your SD or Micro SD card.

   If your device has one of these cards, we highly recommend you remove it and keep it yourself. If you absolutely have to include the card with the device, then you’ll need to erase and format it. You can refer to your owner’s manual or device manufacturer’s support site on how to do this using your device or visit this site for other ways to erase it - [http://www.wikihow.com/Format-an-SD-Card](http://www.wikihow.com/Format-an-SD-Card).

4. Remove your SIM card.

   While most of the data that you store is on the device or a SD card, the SIM card holds your personal identity information that is used to authenticate your device to the wireless carrier’s network and may contain address/phone book data and text messages. Sometimes you can use the SIM in your new phone if it is supported. If you have any questions about that please contact your wireless carrier.

Additional things to be aware of:

- If you are donating, recycling, or selling your device to a company or organization you cannot always count on them to erase it. Research has found that not all companies or organizations that claim to remove data before reusing, recycling or reselling your phone actually do so.

- Wireless service providers (AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, etc.) may offer assistance with erasing the data. They may even have a recycling program available or will erase the data for you. Just remember if it is a University owned device you must follow the [University’s Cell Phone Disposal procedure](http://www.wikihow.com/Format-an-SD-Card).

- Portable devices such as USB flash drives can also contain private information. These should be erased using the manufacturer’s recommendations.

- If your device is not working and you are unable to perform a secure erase, you may want to consider physically destroying it.