

## NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION BLACKBERRY POLICY/PROCEDURES

**1. PURPOSE:** To update guidance for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Central Office (CO) and field employees related to issuance of Blackberry devices and appropriate use of such items.

### 2. POLICY/RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Blackberries issued to NCA employees are government property.** These items are **issued for the purpose of conducting official NCA business**, e.g., contacting the office, coordinating meetings, or checking work voice mail or electronic messages.

b. Executive Order 13513 (October 1, 2009) prohibits the use of electronic text messaging while driving on official business or while using Government-supplied equipment. Details are provided in VA Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration Information Letter 006-2010-1 (available electronically at <http://vaww1.va.gov/VASAFETY> under "DASHO and HR&A Letters").

c. The latest VA Guidelines associated with Blackberries can be found on the VACO IT Support Customer Services Home Page at <http://vaww.vaco.portal.va.gov/sites/cs/default.aspx> under *Documents - Shared Documents - Blackberry Guidance*.

d. Relevant VA Directives and Handbooks (available electronically at <http://www1.va.gov/vapubs/>) include:

(1) VA Directive and Handbook 6500 – Information Security Program applies to all VA information and information systems to include blackberries.

(2) VA Directive 6001 – Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Including Information Technology permits employees **limited personal use** of their assigned Blackberry. Personal use means activity that is conducted for purposes other than accomplishing official or otherwise authorized activity. This includes use of a Blackberry for personal reasons (such as contacting a family member, doctor, or friend) on an irregular basis for a short conversation; or in case of an emergency (such as vehicle mechanical problems or concern for personal safety). VA employees are permitted limited use of Government office equipment for personal needs if the use does not interfere with official business and involves minimal additional expense to the Government. This limited personal use should take place during the employee's non-work time (except for emergencies). The privilege to use Government office equipment for non-Government purposes may be revoked or limited at any time.

(3) VA Handbook 7002 – Logistics Management Procedures sets Department-wide procedures related to property and materiel management policies and responsibilities, including handling accountable personal property such as Blackberries.

e. NCA Central Office Equipment Inventory Standard Operating Procedure (available electronically on the NCA Intranet at [http://vaww.nca.va.gov/docs/info\\_tech/SOP\\_NCACO\\_Equip\\_Inventory.pdf](http://vaww.nca.va.gov/docs/info_tech/SOP_NCACO_Equip_Inventory.pdf)) provides further information about accountability of government property assigned to NCA employees in VA Central Office (VACO).

### 3. ISSUANCE AND SUPPORT OF BLACKBERRIES

a. The Office of Information & Technology (OI&T) has budget responsibility for the VA Blackberry program, including NCA CO and field locations. This notice clarifies that NCA officials and staff will follow the policies, procedures, and guidelines specified below.

#### CO STAFF

b. Employees located in CO will request a Blackberry through their supervisor, providing a summary of their work duties that justify issuance. If approved, the supervisor will send an email to the NCA representative on the VA Information Technology Business Community Advisory Group (BCAG) – Lakisha Wright, NCA IT/Business Requirements and Administrative Service, Office of Management – stating that they recommend issuance of a government Blackberry to that employee for work purposes. The NCA representative will evaluate the request against VA guidelines and inform the supervisor of final approval/disapproval. (**NOTE:** BCAG information, including VA IT guidance memoranda on Mobile Device “Issuance” and “Usage,” is posted at [http://vaww.vaco.portal.va.gov/sites/itbcag/\\_layouts/viewlsts.aspx](http://vaww.vaco.portal.va.gov/sites/itbcag/_layouts/viewlsts.aspx).)

c. The Blackberry will be issued with a number of accessories, including a carrying case, charger, and ear phones. Requests for service, repair, or replacement of the Blackberry or Blackberry accessory should be addressed to the VACO Helpdesk by email ([vacohelpdesk@va.gov](mailto:vacohelpdesk@va.gov)) or telephone (1-888-596-4357, Option #4).

d. The Blackberry and furnished accessories must be returned immediately to the NCA CO Equipment Inventory Liaison when an employee leaves NCA employment or it is determined that an employee no longer needs a Blackberry for official use.

e. Because Blackberry devices have the potential to contain sensitive information, if the Blackberry is lost or stolen:

(1) The employee must - within one hour - notify their supervisor, the NCA Information Security Officer (ISO), and VACO Helpdesk ([vacohelpdesk@va.gov](mailto:vacohelpdesk@va.gov) or 1-888-596-4357, Option #4), so that the service provider can be directed to cancel the service and other appropriate steps can be taken.

(2) The supervisor or designee must:

(a) Immediately notify VA Security and Law Enforcement Police Service (email [VACOSecurity@va.gov](mailto:VACOSecurity@va.gov) or [VACOPoliceForce@va.gov](mailto:VACOPoliceForce@va.gov) or phone (202) 461-6588) and NCA Administrative Support Division Chief (Michael Emrich); and

(b) Within 24 hours after the employee has provided notice of loss or theft, email or provide hard copy of completed VA Form 1217 - Report of Survey (available electronically at <http://vaww4.va.gov/vaforms/>) to the NCA CO Equipment Inventory Liaison (Ann Ventura) in the IT Business Requirements and Administrative Service. The Liaison or Administrative Support Division Chief can assist with information and appropriately completing the form.

**NOTE:** Failure to report loss or theft of the Blackberry, or to complete the Form 1217 after loss or theft, may result in disciplinary action.

f. If the loss or theft of the Blackberry was a result of the employee's gross negligence or reckless conduct, the employee may be required to reimburse VA's OI&T for the cost of the Blackberry. If the employee is not responsible for the loss, a replacement will be ordered at no cost to the employee, contingent upon approval by the appropriate chain of command.

#### FIELD STAFF

g. Employees located at a field site will follow the "Computer and Peripheral Request Procedures" posted under the **Documents** entry on the Quantico Information Technology Center (QITC) Web Portal at <http://vaww.cem.va.gov/> to request a Blackberry. The QITC will request approval from the NCA IT/Business Requirements and Administrative Service, Office of Management, for non-standard requests.

h. A Blackberry will be issued with a number of accessories, including a carrying case, charger, and ear phones. Requests for service, repair, or replacement of a Blackberry or Blackberry accessory should be made to the NCA Remedy Helpdesk via the QITC Web Portal at <http://vaww.cem.va.gov/>.

i. If the Blackberry is lost or stolen, the employee must notify their supervisor and the NCA Remedy Helpdesk via the QITC Center Web Portal at <http://vaww.cem.va.gov/> within 24 hours so that the QITC can notify the service provider to cancel the service.

j. If the loss or theft of the Blackberry was a result of the employee's gross negligence or reckless conduct, the employee may be required to reimburse VA's OI&T for the cost of the Blackberry. If the employee is not responsible for the loss, the QITC will order a replacement Blackberry at no cost to the employee, contingent upon approval by the appropriate chain of command.

k. The Blackberry and furnished accessories must be returned immediately to the QITC when an employee leaves NCA employment or it is determined that an employee no longer needs a Blackberry for official use.

**4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** NCA, Information Technology/Business Requirements and Administrative Service, Office of Management, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, is responsible for guidance related to Blackberry devices.

**5. RESCISSION:** This notice rescinds NCA Notice 2008-04 - Blackberry Handheld Unit Policy/Procedures in its entirety. The policies and procedures contained in this notice will remain in effect until specifically rescinded by NCA formal guidance published after the date of this notice.

/s/  
Timothy Godlove  
Director, IT/Business Requirements  
and Administrative Service

Distribution: Electronic