



## **POLICY IV-A-2-e: Harassing Communications**

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### **Policy/Procedure**

Annoying or harassing phone calls, e-mails, entries on social networking sites and text messages are a common problem on college campuses. Though many times these activities are viewed as pranks, state law considers such activities as Harassment, which may be either a summary offense or a third degree misdemeanor.

In the Pennsylvania Crimes Code, a person commits the crime of harassment (Title 18 Section 2709) when, with intent to harass, annoy or alarm another, a person:

- engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts which serve no legitimate purpose;
- communicates to or about such other person and lewd, lascivious, threatening or obscene words, language, drawings or caricatures;
- communicates repeatedly in an anonymous manner;
- communicates repeatedly at extremely inconvenient hours; or
- communicates repeatedly in a manner other than specified elsewhere in the statute

Harassment by Communication is punishable by imprisonment and a fine.

If you are receiving annoying or harassing calls, e-mails, entries on social networking sites or text messages, contact Public Safety. An officer will meet you to discuss the situation and to determine the

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best course of action to be taken. You will be asked to keep a log of your calls or messages, and in the case of telephone communication, a description of the caller's voice, background noises, etc. Depending on the situation, with assistance from other departments or agencies, Public Safety may be able to determine the origin of the calls.

When dealing with annoying or harassing calls, e-mails, entries on social networking sites or text messages:

- Never engage an annoying or threatening caller in conversation
- Never answer personal questions or give out information to unknown callers
- If calls are received repeatedly in a short period of time, unplug or turn off your phone
- Contact Public Safety at extension 1111 for assistance
- If you are receiving these types of calls on your cellular phone, keep the calling number in your phone's memory to show DPS.
- If you are receiving these calls from a blocked number, there is no way to trace those calls. Do not answer any calls that are blocked. Permit the caller to leave a message, and save it for DPS.
- Save any annoying, threatening or alarming text messages, e-mails, voicemails or entries on social networking sites and provide Public Safety with this information when you speak with an officer.

<b>History/Revision Information</b>
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**Responsible Office/Division:** Public Safety

**Effective Date:**

**Last Amended Date:** 10/20/2010

**Next Review Date:**

**Also Found In:** DPS Web Site  
(<http://www.dickinson.edu/student-life/campus-safety/crime-reporting/Harassing-Phone-Calls/>)