



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

September 18, 2012

IOWA INSTRUCTION 270-384 - GUIDELINES ON DISTRICT USE OF NRCS TELECONFERENCE NUMBERS

IA384.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this instruction is to give guidance to Iowa NRCS employees on the proper use of the agency's teleconference numbers. Specifically, this instruction will help employees to know when it is appropriate for Iowa's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to use our teleconference numbers.

IA384.1 SCOPE

These instructions will be followed by all NRCS employees.

IA384.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed at <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/> under the Iowa NRCS eDirectives System section.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Hubbert".

Jon Hubbert
Acting State Conservationist

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Helping People Help the Land

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2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The NRCS utilizes a teleconferencing service procured through a contract held by the USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer. This service is intended primarily for NRCS use; however, use by an outside organization is warranted in certain situations.

3. PROCESS:

Even though the cost for using the teleconferencing service is nominal, the NRCS must follow appropriations law principles, which state that agency funds should only be expended for the purpose Congress intended. For this reason, it would be inappropriate for the NRCS to allow the teleconferencing service to be used for non-NRCS mission purposes.

The following guidelines should be used to determine when the NRCS can let the SWCDs use the teleconferencing service.

- Consider the meeting's purpose. If the meeting is solely or primarily scheduled to talk about a district's internal affairs (such as district staffing, paying bills, and district financial report), then it would not be appropriate. If the meeting is used to discuss the mutual mission of both the district and the NRCS, then use would be appropriate.
- Consider the amount of time spent on topics relating to the NRCS's mission. If a one-hour meeting consists of 55 minutes of district internal topics, and only 5 minutes of discussion about conservation efforts, then use would not be appropriate. A significant amount of the meeting should relate to the NRCS mission for the teleconference use to be appropriate. NRCS mission-related topics would be items such as NRCS activities reports, conservation plan approvals, state cost share program application approvals, cost share rate decisions, maintenance agreements, soil loss limit updates, watershed project decisions and planning, and planning for future NRCS/District cooperation.
- Consider whether district revenue-generating topics will be discussed. The NRCS is not permitted to use its resources to assist the districts in their revenue-generating activities. The NRCS teleconferencing service should not be used to discuss this topic or to plan revenue-generating events or projects, even if such a topic is only included as a small portion of the meeting. However, a District Treasurer reporting on the status of funds received and spent would be permissible.

The teleconferencing service may be used by employee organizations that are officially recognized by the NRCS (organizations like the Soil and Water Conservation Society). However, use by these organizations should not impede NRCS mission accomplishment; if there is a scheduling conflict, the NRCS has first priority for use of the teleconference number.

Districts should contact the NRCS Area Office Administrative Management Assistant to schedule use of the teleconference number.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact Adam Stiegelmeier, Assistant State Conservationist for Management, at 515-284-4525.

Approved By: 

Date: *Sept. 18, 2012*

Jon Hubbert
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