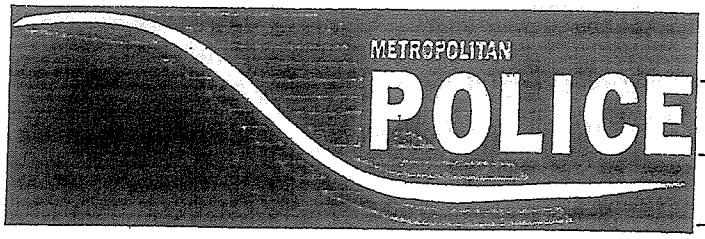
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Title
Customer Service Standards and Testing

Topic
Customer Service

Effective Date
September 12, 2005

Distribution
B

Relates to:
GO-PER-201.35
(Customer Service Standards and Testing)

Replaces:
Standard Operating Procedures Customer Service Standards and Testing (Dated March 25, 2001)

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I. BACKGROUND

This Standard Operating Procedure details the specific standards and behaviors for implementing GO-PER-201.35 (Customer Service Standards and Testing).

MPD employee performance in implementing customer service standards will be evaluated by internal and external customer service checks.

II. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meaning designated:

A. Desk Numbers – telephone numbers for individual Department employees.

B. External Customers – members of the public or members of other agencies or organizations requesting services or information either in person or over the phone.

C. External Customer Service Checks – quality control personnel, supervised by the Mayor's Office, will be phoning Metropolitan Police Department members throughout the organization, requesting services or information, and scoring and documenting the results of calls based on the level of service provided. Calls will be scored on a five-point scale, with five being the highest quality score. The Mayor has implemented a performance standard that 80 percent of city agencies will receive a test call average score of at least 4.0.

D. Internal Customers – Employees of the Department who request services or information, either in person, or over the phone.

E. Internal Customer Service Checks – Community volunteers and/or police, supervised by the Office of Organizational Development, who are trained to make telephone calls, or in-person visits, to test the quality of services being delivered by main, large, or small service units in the Department. Calls and visits will be documented and scored based on the level of service provided, and feedback will be provided to unit commanders.

F. Large Service Numbers – published numbers that go directly to an operational unit providing a service (e.g., a district station, Corporate Communications, the Office of the Chief).

G. Main Service Numbers – entry points into the Metropolitan Police Department. Main numbers route calls throughout the organization.

H. Member – Refers to both sworn and civilian employees of the Department.

I. Service Unit – Department elements that provide service directly to the public.

J. Small Service Numbers – phone numbers receiving a volume of calls that do not demand more than one dedicated, full-time equivalent employee staffing the number.

III. BASIC CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

A. Every member, regardless of rank, grade or assignment, is responsible for providing the highest quality of customer service. Failure to do so may result in adverse action up to, and including, removal from the position.

B. Members shall use customer-friendly telephone protocol, which includes:

1. A standard greeting when answering each phone call.

2. Standard "on-hold" procedures.

3. Standard transferring procedures.

4. Standard "end-call" procedures for information and/or service requests.

C. Members shall take personal responsibility for each call, and each request for service or information.

D. Members and units shall record a standard greeting in their voice mailbox messages.

E. Activated voice mailboxes shall be operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When inoperative, a request for unit servicing will be made within 24 hours to the Landline and Wireless Telephone Support Unit in the Office of Police Communications.

F. Phone calls shall be returned within 24 hours or one (1) business day of receipt unless extenuating circumstances exist (e.g., sick leave).

G. All main service numbers shall be staffed at all times during hours of operation. The 9-1-1 and 3-1-1 numbers are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

H. Members shall promptly respond to in-person requests for information or service.

I. Generally, handling in-person customer requests should be given preference over handling telephone customer requests. Exceptions should be made in the case of emergency phone calls.

IV. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

A. Telephone Procedures

1. All Metropolitan Police Department employees shall:

a. Maintain a cordial demeanor and tone throughout all telephone interactions.

b. Not use speakerphone when speaking with a customer.

c. Not chew food or gum when speaking with a customer.

d. Avoid secondary conversations with individuals other than the caller, while the caller is on the phone.

e. Take responsibility for each call, even if it has been misdirected. Either handle the request, or provide the phone number and transfer the caller to a person who can handle the request.

f. Use standard "on-hold" procedures:

(1) Ask permission before putting caller on hold.

(2) While working on resolving the caller's request, revisit the caller every 30 seconds to ask if caller wants to continue to hold.

(3) If caller does not want to hold, take the caller's phone number and call him or her back when the request is resolved.

g. Follow "warm-transfer" procedures:

(1) Provide reference information to the caller before transferring the call (name and telephone number of person to whom the call is being transferred).

(2) Before transferring the call, provide your name and phone number to the caller, and instruct him/her to call back for additional assistance if the caller is disconnected, or unable to leave a voicemail message.

h. Use standard "end-call" procedures for callers requesting services:

(1) Ask, "May I help you with anything else?"

(2) End call by saying, "Thank you for calling" and "Have a nice day", or "It was a pleasure to help you."

i. If service requests cannot be immediately resolved, keep individuals informed of the progress of their requests.

(1) Provide a date when the requested information or service will be ready.

(2) Call the customer on that date, and provide the requested information or service, or provide a reason for any delays, and a new date.

j. Politely refer customers to a supervisor if customers are dissatisfied with the outcome of their request.

k. All Department members with voicemail shall record a standard voice mailbox message.

(1) State name and, if sworn, state rank. If civilian, state job title.

(2) State the name of organization and unit.

(3) Provide an alternate phone number, if necessary, in case of an emergency.

(4) State that calls will be returned within 24 hours, or the next business day.

(5) In the case of an extended absence greeting, provide the return date.

l. Ensure that voice mailboxes will be able to receive and record messages.

(1) Regularly listen to, and clear, messages from the system.

(2) If there is a problem with a voice mailbox, within 24 hours, contact the Landline and Wireless Telephone Support Unit in the Office of Police Communications so the problem can be resolved.

2. Metropolitan Police Department receptionists and front-desk officers for main, large, or small service numbers and units shall:

a. Answer the phone within three rings. If on another line with a phone customer, or speaking with a visitor when the phone rings, say, "excuse me one moment," and take the new call. Then, unless the call is an emergency, take a name and phone number, and let the caller know he/she will be called back as quickly as possible.

b. Use a standard greeting when answering the phone.

(1) State name.

(2) State title.

(3) State the name of organization and unit.

(4) Ask, "How may I help you?"

B. In-Person Procedures

1. All Metropolitan Police Department employees shall:

a. When approached by a member of the public under normal circumstances, respond with a prompt acknowledgement and greeting.

b. Ask, "How may I help you?' And if necessary, say, "I'll be with you in a moment."

c. Maintain a cordial demeanor and tone throughout the in-person interaction.

d. Offer full name, if appropriate.

e. Be accountable for every information and service request, even if it is misdirected.

(1) Probe for additional information, if necessary, to appropriately respond to the request.

(2) If possible, and if appropriate, respond to the request if it does not interfere with the normal tour of duty. For instance, if a city service is requested for an issue pertaining to public safety, fill out a PD Form 904 and turn it in at check off. Otherwise, provide a referral to another unit or agency for the requested service.

(3) If unable to resolve the request immediately, take a name and phone number in order to provide progress reports, or information, about the request resolution.

f. End the encounter by:

(1) Asking, 'May I help you with anything else?"

(2) Saying "Have a nice day" or "It was a pleasure to help you."

2. Metropolitan Police Department receptionists and front-desk officers for main, large or small service numbers and units, shall generally give preference to in-person requests for service over telephone requests for service.

a. If on the phone with a customer, and another customer walks in, members should briefly excuse themselves from the call, and let the visitor know they'll be with them as soon as possible.

(1) Unless the phone call is an emergency, members should take the name and phone number of the caller, and let them know they will be called right back.

(2) After attending to the visitor's request, members should call back the telephone customer as soon as possible.

b. If the phone rings while members are handling the in-person request, they should excuse themselves to the person, and answer the phone. Then, unless it is an emergency, they should take the name and telephone number of the caller, and call back as soon as possible.

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Chief of Police

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