

<p style="text-align: center;">CORPORATE POLICY & PROCEDURE</p>		<p>Policy No.: ADM-01</p> <p>Pages:7</p> <p>Effective Date: August 28, 2018</p> <p>Supercedes: November 17, 2015</p>
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SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

PURPOSE

To provide for guiding principles and standards in providing customer service to all customers, both internally and externally, of the Township of Woolwich. Woolwich wants to be known for providing exceptional customer service regardless of whether the customer is internal or external.

POLICY DETAILS

1. CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

The standards for response to Customer inquiries vary by contact method and are outlined below. The response may be a resolution to the inquiry, but at a minimum, must acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and the status of the inquiry. Updates regarding process are also critical.

CUSTOMER GREETING EXPECTATIONS

When a customer visits one of our locations they can expect:

- To be greeted in a positive manner.
- To be served with professionalism, skill and knowledge.
- To be served in the most cost effective, timely, accurate manner possible.
- To be treated with dignity and respect, and in a courteous manner.
- To be treated with tolerance and respect of different cultures and ethnicities.
- To be advised of the expected waiting and response time, if necessary.
- To be provided with information that they have requested or be referred to the appropriate person to be advised of the next steps.
- To be treated in a fair, honest and consistent manner, while complying with all our policies, by-laws and regulations.
- To be asked if further assistance is required and provided with the opportunity to provide feedback for service improvement.
- To leave feeling satisfied that he/she has received professional, helpful and courteous assistance.

Staff will make best efforts to anticipate the needs of repeat customers.

IN PERSON

Customers who have taken the time to come to a Township facility for service are a high priority.

- Customers must be greeted at the counter promptly. Staff should make best efforts to respond in a target of 10 seconds.
- If the Customer Service Representative will be away from the counter, appropriate signage will be in place asking customers to ring the bell for service.
- Serve customers in the order that they arrive, and indicate the expected wait time to those customers in line.
- In situations with long lines, request the public's patience and understanding, and advise that everyone will be processed as quickly as possible.
- Before redirecting a customer to another floor or Township facility, call the area you are re-directing them to and confirm that it is the correct area and the appropriate staff person is available.
- For requests that are complex and/or time consuming, it will be recommended to customers that a meeting time be scheduled.
- Staff are not required to accept abusive, obscene or threatening behaviour. Such interactions should be terminated and reported to the staff person's immediate supervisor and dealt with in accordance with the Township's Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

TELEPHONES AND VOICE MAIL

As a basic principle of customer service, a person rather than voice mail must be the public's first contact, where available, with the Township of Woolwich. At the same time, voice mail is a useful business tool which can be used to enhance customer service.

The practices that follow are subject to modification based on the telephone and voice mail features at Township facilities:

- Listen to callers requests in a genuine and attentive manner and help to answer questions or resolve issues.
- Unless there is a legitimate need for confidentiality, staff must identify themselves by their name and the Department they work in.
- All callers must be given the option to receive personal assistance or leave a voice mail message.
- End the call in a courteous manner by thanking the caller.
- Ask for caller's permission before putting them on hold.
- Staff are not required to accept abusive, obscene or threatening telephone calls. Such calls should be terminated and reported to the staff person's immediate supervisor and dealt with in accordance with the Township's Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.

Staff should make sure that the customer identifies themselves and the nature of their complaint. (If the customer will not identify themselves, and the concern identified is not of a critical emergency nature or public health and safety concern, then the customer will be advised that no further action is possible.)

Transferring a Call

- When forwarding calls, staff will identify themselves and advise the recipient they are forwarding a call, when required and/or appropriate.
- Provide the caller with the phone number of the person you are transferring them to in case you lose the caller.
- Transfer only once and to the right person. If you are in doubt about which staff member should handle the caller's request, ask for the caller's name and number and call them back when you have the correct information.
- When transferring a call to the next staff member give as much detail as you can so that the caller does not have to repeat the reason for calling.
- If you receive a voicemail or the line is busy when transferring a call, inform the caller that the person they are trying to reach is not available at the moment and ask them if they would like to leave a voicemail, take the person's direct number to try later, or leave their name and number with you.

Voicemail Out-of-Office

- Unless staff are out of the office for more than one day, voice mail messages may be generic in nature and should provide the option for the caller to receive personal assistance.
- When staff are out of the office for two or more consecutive days, voice mail greetings must indicate when the staff person is to be back and provide the option in the greeting for the caller to receive personal assistance or to leave a voice mail message.
- If the voicemail advises callers to 'press zero to reach a staff member immediately' ensure this feature is functioning correctly.

2. CONTACT METHOD & RELATED POLICY

2.1. TELEPHONE CALLS

When the Township of Woolwich is contacted by telephone the person calling can expect;

- The main incoming telephone lines will be answered promptly (within a target of 30 seconds);
- Their call will be answered within a target of 3 rings, at individual lines;
- Their call will not be redirected more than once;
- They will have the option of reaching a person.
- All telephone calls (from both internal and external customers) will be returned within 1 business day or 24 hours;
- Callers will be assisted and if needed, will be directed to the correct area;
- Callers will not be transferred to another voice mail box without being made aware;
- Customers calling the correct area will have their issue resolved by involving as few Township Staff as possible.

2.2. TELEPHONE MESSAGES (Voicemail or Paper)

Customers can expect that their messages, either left on voicemail or in writing, will be acknowledged, within 1 business day and indicate when a resolution to the request will be provided, if not completed in the first response to the customer.

- Personal voice mail greetings will be courteous, give the customer as much information as possible and invite them to leave a detailed message.
- Recorded vacation or absence messages will provide an alternative contact and phone number as backup while out of the office.

2.3. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE (Regular Mail)

Written correspondence (by regular mail) received in the conduct of the Township business, EXCLUDING unsolicited materials such as training programs, promotional events, general advertising, etc. will be acknowledged, verbally, in writing or in a method preferred by the customer, within 10 business days, and indicate when a resolution to the request will be provided if not completed in the first response to the customer.

Ongoing communication/status updates will be provided to the customer on his/her inquiry on a regular basis until resolved. All responses will acknowledge the request in a professional manner and indicate the appropriate staff member responsible for following up/seeking a solution to the customer's request and his/her direct contact information.

2.4. E-MAIL AND FAX CORRESPONDENCE

Electronic correspondence (by e-mail or fax) received in the conduct of Township business, EXCLUDING unsolicited materials such as training programs, promotional events, general advertising, etc. will be acknowledged, verbally, in writing or in a method preferred by the customer, within 2 business days and indicate when a resolution to the request will be provided if not completed in the first response to the customer.

Ongoing communication/status updates will be provided to the customer on his/her inquiry on a regular basis until resolved. All responses will acknowledge the request in a professional manner and indicate the appropriate staff member responsible for following up/seeking a solution to the customer's request and his/her direct contact information.

2.5. ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA CORRESPONDENCE (including Township website and various social media tools)

The Township's website supports specific types of online customer requests as well as general requests for information and feedback. Correspondence and requests received from the website in the conduct of Township business, EXCLUDING unsolicited materials such as training programs, promotional events, general advertising, etc. will be acknowledged, by email, within 2 business days and indicate when a resolution to the request will be provided if not completed in the first response to the customer.

Ongoing communication/ status updates will be provided to the customer on his/her inquiry on a regular basis until resolved.

The Township supports specific social media channels as part of its online connectivity with citizens. Requests received from the various social media channels will be acknowledged utilizing the same communication channel or that preferred by the customer within 24 hours or 1 business day. All responses will acknowledge the request in a professional manner and indicate the appropriate staff member responsible for following up/seeking a solution to the customer's request and his/her direct contact information.

2.6. ACCESS TO CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES OR ALTERNATES

Sufficient employee resources, both appropriately trained front-line staff and supervisory staff, will be available during normal business hours such that the other corporate-wide service standards, regarding response times and customer service greetings, are met.

2.7. CUSTOMER INQUIRIES

The guidelines for response to Customer inquiries vary by contact method and are outlined above. Inquiries will be appropriately prioritized and followed up on in accordance with the standards. Customers should not have an expectation that queue jumping is appropriate, save and except for critical emergency situations or public health and safety issues. The response may be a resolution, but at a minimum must acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and the status of the inquiry.

- If the request is not able to be resolved immediately, straight-forward requests will be completed within 5 business days.
- However, in those cases where the time frame for resolution is anticipated to be longer than 5 business days, the customer will be advised, provided with a status update of the request, as well as an explanation of expected actions and an estimated timeframe for completion.

2.8. INQUIRIES FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

- It is the policy of the Township that an initial response time of 24 to 48 hours be established for the following types of inquiries and that they be tracked:
 - Complaints or concerns from the public, relayed by Council, or directly from members of Council
 - Requests for action from the public or members of Council
 - Items brought forward at Council meetings

Staff are not expected to provide responses to Council or public enquiries after hours, or on weekends and holidays. This applies to the public and Council. If there is an emergency or public health and safety concern, customers will be directed to the on-call system.

2.9. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The complaints process must conform to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements.

- The complaints process should be accessible at any point during service delivery via various channels: phone, letter, fax or email and in-person at relevant locations.
- Information about how and where to complain should be well publicized through established communication mechanisms such as the Internet and other means of public communications.
- All complaints should be acknowledged and resolved in a timely manner. Complainants should receive notification of receipt of the complaint including a time frame for resolution and will be kept informed of delays.

- Confidentiality—all complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the Municipal Freedom of the Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Information collected, used and disclosed will be in accordance with the Act.
- All complaints and their outcomes must be logged to track complaint trends, resolutions and make service improvements.
- Each staff member will be responsible for recording and tracking the complaint received.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility of employees:

- Take all training offered regarding customer service and keep up to date with any new policies and procedures.
- Report any disruption in service to Supervisors, as appropriate.
- Understand and agree it is their responsibility to meet these standards as they will form part of the ongoing as well as annual performance appraisal process.

Responsibility of Supervisors:

- Encourage all employees to take the training that is offered by the Township with respect to Customer Service.
- Ensure employees understand and follow the Customer Service Standards and Expectations set out by the Township, and further understand it is their responsibility to meet these standards as they will form part of the annual performance appraisal process.
- Inform Human Resources if there is any additional training needed for specific individuals or specific departments.
- Undergo training themselves, keep informed of changes in process, policy or procedure and actively seek information on Customer Service.
- Ensure the employees supervised have the necessary resources, tools and support to provide excellent customer service and meet the standards.
- Ensure that front line staff have up to date information regarding current municipal issues and events so that they can appropriately and promptly address inquiries.

Responsibility of the Office of the Chief Administrator:

- Ensure all policies are up-to-date and communicate the same to all employees.
- Ensure all relevant programs, policies, procedures are implemented.
- Make training available through the Human Resources area for all employees.

Responsibility of Council

- Ensure that a full, fair and balanced assessment of any complaint or inquiry is made so that Council is in the best position to make an informed decision on the issue or concern that has been presented to them.

4. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

End-arounds (by-passing appropriate staff) should not be allowed i.e. customers should deal with the most appropriately designated staff person, and not be allowed to approach a more senior level staff person in the organization in the first instance. Escalation of an issue to a more senior level staff person is allowed if the customer can provide appropriate rationale that his/her concern

was not fully addressed. In an attempt to avoid end-around situations, staff should ask customers if they have previously been dealing with any other staff representative in the organization. In certain circumstances, staff may find it beneficial to communicate the results of an inquiry to other colleagues in the organization to try and mitigate potential end-around situations.

If a member of Council or Senior Management receives an end around, they should advise the customer of the appropriate first step and offer to connect the customer with the appropriate staff person.

Staff should not provide responses without appropriate thought and deliberation, in order to preserve and protect the customer service image of the organization.

Workplace violence, harassment and any forms of verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated. Staff are at liberty to terminate communications in these instances if the customer is unwilling to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

5. REFUSAL OF SERVICE

In situations in which it has become clear that a customer will not be satisfied by staff's response, or a customer continues to display unacceptable or abusive behaviour, Staff, with confirmation from their Director, are given the discretion to decide on an appropriate level of response. The level of response by staff may include a decision to act on some or all of the complaints, to not act on some or all of the complaints, or to assign priority to some or all of the complaints.

In making their decision on the appropriate level of response to such complaints, staff will have regard to the following criteria:

- Safety factors;
- Available resources;
- Potential impact on the complainant;
- Potential impact of not responding;
- Complaints that appear to result from a form of vendetta or retribution or are otherwise deemed to be frivolous and vexatious.

CORPORATE POLICY & PROCEDURE



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2015

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPECTATIONS



Customer Service Expectations....Going the EXTRA MILE!

A review of the Township's Customer Service processes was undertaken. This is in part due to the increased expectations of our customers for high-quality service, and a challenge from Council to improve customer service standards.

There have been both normal and atypical customer service situations in the past few years that have received attention at the Council level. Even though the Township could not directly help the atypical situations, Township Staff have an obligation to provide customer service and facilitate, or go the extra mile, to ensure the customer is provided with the necessary next steps.

Customer Service Expectations are in addition to the Customer Service Standards. We trust that as a customer yourself, you will see the benefits of applying the following principles:

Principle #1: Do What You Said You Were Going To Do When You Said You Were Going To Do It

One of the most basic principles of delivering exceptional customer service is to make sure the customer understands the actions that you will be taking, the process that will be followed and the timeline that will be required to address the question or issue. Then the most important thing for staff is execution i.e. do what you said you were going to do in the timeline you said you would, and if for some reason the timeline needs to be revised be upfront and provide the appropriate rationale along with a revised timeline.

Principle #2: Help Foster a Corporate Culture that Displays a "Can Do" Attitude

As staff in the public service, it's important that we exhibit a "Can Do" attitude. As staff we need to demonstrate that we are here to help and explore all possible ways to find a positive outcome. That doesn't mean that we can resolve every situation to the customer's liking, but what it does mean is that when the answer has to be "No" the customer feels satisfied that staff did their utmost to try and help.

Principle #3: Put a Human Touch on Unusual Situations Whenever Possible

If it has been determined the customer cannot be directly assisted by Township Staff, whenever possible deliver such news either in person, or over the phone. This is not meant to replace written communication, and formal written notice should be documented for complex or controversial complaints.

Principle #4: Acknowledge & Attempt to Facilitate

If the matter is a private or civil concern, the responsibility of another municipality or outside Township jurisdiction, acknowledge that you aren't able to directly help them, but offer that we will do what we can to try and find an organization that may be able to help.

Principle #5: Go the EXTRA MILE

In out of the ordinary situations, source out contacts, research other opportunities, or ask your colleagues for assistance. Provide the information to the customer, or if unable to locate, take their information and let them know you will call them back when you have the name of who they should contact.

Principle #6: Follow-Up

When a customer has been referred to another organization, a good best practice is to follow up with the customer a week after the initial contact for significant issues. The follow-up contact should be to ensure that they were able to make contact with the appropriate person or service.

Principle #7: Remember there is Only One Customer in a Two-Tier Government

In our system of two-tier government, when a customer service complaint is received by Township staff that is clearly related to a Region service or program, staff will make best efforts to facilitate contact with the appropriate Region staff representative who can best assist the customer.