DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Program Statement

OPI:	**DIR**
Number:	**1220.1D**
Date:	**November 5, 2012**
Supersedes:	**1220.1C (06/15/11)**
Subject:	**Customer Service**

1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE.** The purpose of this directive is to ensure that DC Department of Corrections (DOC) employees provide courteous and professional customer service. This directive shall apply to all employees and agents conducting business on behalf of the DOC.

2. **POLICY.** It is the policy of DOC to ensure that customer service is prompt, professional, and courteous and that information provided is accurate. For the purpose of this directive, customers are defined in the following manner:

   a. External customers are persons outside of DOC who depend upon employees to deliver services. They include, but are not limited to District of Columbia citizens and constituents, other government personnel and persons acting in the interest of incarcerated persons.

   b. Internal Customers are persons inside of DOC to include co-workers within and external to the employee's unit, managers and supervisors, and inmates.

3. **APPLICABILITY**. This policy shall apply to all DOC employees, employees of DOC contractors, volunteers, and interns pursuant to the District Government's Office of Customer Service Operations (CSO).

4. **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES.** The reputation and image of DOC and the customer's experience is shaped by the quality of service given and the messages conveyed through each contact. The expected results of this directive are:

   a. Employees shall render prompt, accurate and courteous service to all customers and constituents who conduct business with the DOC.

   b. Employees shall meet established standards for answering and responding to customer telephone calls.

   c. Employees shall meet established standards for responding to all Mayoral correspondence.

5. NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

a. In accordance with the D.C. Human Rights Act of 1977, as amended, D.C. Official Code §2-1401.01 et seq., (hereinafter, "the Act"), the District of Columbia does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, genetic information, disability, source of income, status as a victim of an intrafamily offense or place or residence or business. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that is also prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED

a. Directives Rescinded

1) PS 1220.1C Customer Service (6/15/11)

b. **Directives Referenced**

1) PS 1270.1 Victims Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) Program

2) PS 1300.1 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

3) PS 1280.2 Reporting and Notification Procedures for Significant Incidents and Extraordinary Occurrence

4) PS 1340.2 Media Public Relations

5) PS 3300.1 Employee Code of Ethics and Conduct

7. AUTHORITY

a. District of Columbia Customer Service Standards

b. Mayor's Memorandum 2003-4, Minimum Standards for Telephone-based Customer Service (02/28/03)

c. D.C. Code § 24-211.02 Powers; Promulgation of Rules.

8. **ACA STANDARDS REFERENCED. None**

9. **DEFINITIONS**

   a. **Correspondence –** Any written material transmitted to the Mayor and forwarded to an agency for action or information. This includes letters, memoranda, e-mails and faxes from constituents, the District Council, other District and Federal agencies, etc.

   b. **Technology Officer –** DOC employee designated as the agency's liaison to the District of Columbia Government Office of the Chief Technology Officer, responsible for oversight and monitoring of the agency's telecommunications program.

   c. **Correspondence Tracking System –** Designated individuals in the Director's Office shall use the Mayor's Intranet Quorum database to process the Mayor's correspondence.

10. **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE OPERATIONS (CSO)** is the agency responsible for management and oversight of city services. The primary components of this agency are comprised of:

    a. The Citywide Call Center receives the majority of requests for service and information from constituents and routes the requests to the appropriate agencies for response.

    b. The Mayor's Correspondence Unit receives written correspondence addressed to the Mayor and routes the request to the appropriate agencies for response.

    c. CSO's Tester program monitors how responsive and constituent-friendly agencies are when providing service.

11. **DOC CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAM.** DOC shall offer quality customer service in the following manner:

    a. Managers and Supervisors shall:

       1) Exercise the highest level of professional courtesy towards all persons who contact their unit.

       2) Observe staff performance, solicit customer/caller feedback and investigate customer complaints of employee telephone assistance, service and/or conduct.

       3) Ensure that staff have a basic understanding of the primary functions of the DOC and a basic knowledge of District services such as:

a) 311 Non-Emergency and 911 Emergency

b) 727-1000 D.C. Call Center

c) (202) INFOR 211, DHS “Answers Please”

d) The District of Columbia website address (www.dc.gov)

e) All main agency numbers

4) Positively and publicly recognize employees who render outstanding customer service.

5) Initiate appropriate disciplinary action against employees failing to meet customer service standards.

b. Technology Officer. The Technology Officer shall ensure computers and telecommunications equipment is available and operational.

c. Director’s Office. Designated individuals in the Director’s Office manage and track DOC correspondence through the Mayor’s Intranet Quorum and monitor the agency’s compliance with District Government customer service protocols.

d. Employees. Each employee shall:

1) Treat customers with enthusiasm, courtesy and respect and use language that is easily understandable.

2) Promptly answer customers’ questions with accurate information, but do so only on matters within their purview and in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies to include FOIA and rights of privacy statues.

3) As directed by the Director’s Office, each employee shall promptly respond to customer’s suggestions, concerns and complaints.

4) Each employee is responsible for using government telecommunications technology correctly in order to complete work related tasks or for conducting business on behalf of the District of Columbia.

e. Inquiries from the media and the general public about the agency, its employees or inmates shall be referred to the Government and Public Affairs Officer.

12. TRAINING

a. The Training Administrator shall develop and maintain the agency's Customer Service Training Program.

b. The Training Administrator shall incorporate Customer Service Training into the Pre-service and In-service Training Programs.

c. The Training Administrator shall provide clerical support staff, command center staff, staff entrance and visitor's entrance staff with annual specialized customer service training.

13. DOC TELEPHONE CUSTOMER SERVICE

a. Main, Large and Small Service Numbers

1) Managers and supervisors shall ensure all main, large and small service numbers shall be staffed during business hours.

   a) Main Numbers include but are not limited to the Grimke Building main line and the Central Detention Facility (CDF) Command Center.

   b) Large Service Numbers include but are not limited to the CDF Records Office.

   c) Small Service Numbers include but are not limited to numbers to the Offices of the Deputy Directors, the Administrators and the Office Chiefs.

b. Incoming Telephone Calls

1) Telephones shall be answered within 3 rings.

2) Employees shall only accept local collect or long distance collect calls when authorized by the Director, Deputy Director, Administrator or Office Chief.

3) Employees shall be courteous to customers and *shall not:*

   a) Use the speakerphone when talking with customers except when engaging in a conference call.

   b) Chew food or gum while talking with a customer.

   c) Hold secondary conversations with individuals other than the caller while the caller is on the phone.

d) Become confrontational.

4) Each employee shall state his/her name and the service area, e.g., “Good Morning or Good Afternoon, You have reached the DC Department of Corrections, John Doe speaking. How may I assist you?” and provide the requested information, “May I be of further assistance?” “Thank you for calling the DC Department of Corrections, have a nice day or evening.” The person calling should be thanked.

5) Callers shall be given the opportunity to identify themselves and briefly state their business prior to being placed on hold.

6) Employees shall ensure that callers are not kept waiting for extended periods. If the wait period is expected to be more than thirty (30) seconds, the employee shall give the customer the options of continuing to hold, to call back, to leave a message, or to be transferred to another employee who will provide the appropriate assistance.

7) The employee shall frequently check back with the caller who has been placed on hold.

8) Each employee shall attentively listen to the caller’s request and may repeat the caller’s message to ensure that the request is understood.

9) Customer assistance shall be provided at the first line of authority as is deemed appropriate. Each employee shall provide an appropriate resolution if it is within the employee’s purview.

10) If the employee is not able to resolve the issue and is not reasonably certain of the appropriate unit or staff to handle the matter, the employee shall first attempt to locate and make contact with the proper party or service area prior to transferring the caller.

11) If it becomes apparent that identification of the appropriate staff will take more than a few minutes, the employee will give the caller the opportunity to continue to hold; to call back; or to leave his/her phone number so that the appropriate individual may return the phone call.

12) Employees shall minimize the number of times a caller is transferred to resolve an issue by taking the message and delivering it to the appropriate staff person for resolution. The goal is one transfer per caller and that transfer will be to another person, not voicemail. Therefore the employee shall first contact the appropriate employee prior to transferring the caller. If the intended employee is not available the caller shall be given that party’s name, telephone number and a recommended time to contact them.

13) If the appropriate party is not available and the matter is of an urgent nature, the following options should be given:

a) Allowing the employee to first attempt to locate and make contact with a higher authority who may provide immediate assistance;

b) Give the caller the phone number of the person who can immediately assist them; or

c) Be transferred to the voice mail of the party who can assist them in the requested party's absence.

14) Each employee shall use empathy and exercise professional courtesy toward all callers.

c. **Returning Telephone Calls.** Calls made to all numbers at every level of government shall be returned within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day.

d. **Handling Complaints.** Customers shall be treated with respect and empathy and employees shall handle complaints using the following guidelines:

1) Avoid personal responses to professional matters presented.

2) Remain calm and listen carefully to the complaint.

3) Focus on the problem, not the person.

4) Repeat the complaint and request acknowledgement that it was correctly received.

5) Apologize that the problem has occurred.

6) Acknowledge the customer's feelings of anger, frustration, disappointment, etc.

7) Explain what action will be taken to correct the problem expeditiously.

8) Thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention.

9) Request assistance if problem resolution is not reached.

e. **Voice Mail**

1) *Main, Large and Small Service.* A voice mail greeting for all main numbers shall be utilized as an "after hours" greeting. At a minimum

this greeting will convey the following information:

a) Thank the caller for contacting the DC Government.

b) Explain that their call is important to the DC Government.

c) Identify the name of the agency, the organizational unit and office.

d) Identify the service that is provided through this organizational unit or office.

e) Provide normal hours of business including days and hours of operation.

f) Provide the information items the caller is requested to leave for returns calls during normal business hours, or when appropriate, ask the caller to call back during stated business hours.

g) A number to call for immediate assistance.

h) When recording desk voice mail messages, the employee shall eliminate unnecessary background noises, speak in a clear, distinctive voice and reflect the same professionalism that would be provided during a face-to face business conversation with the customer.

i) Each employee shall respond within twenty-four hours or on the next business day to requests for assistance left by customers on automated answering devices, to either verify receipt of the call or whenever possible to immediately provide the appropriate assistance.

j) Voice mailboxes shall be checked through out the work day.

k) Voice mail greetings that apply to specific time periods shall be promptly updated.

2) *Desk Telephone Standard Greetings* shall include the following information:

a) Name of Employee

b) Title of Employee

c) Organizational Unit of Employee

d) The employee's anticipated period of absence if applicable. An alternate person and telephone number to contact for immediate

assistance.

e) Information indicating their call will be returned within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day to either verify receipt of the service request and/or to provide a response to the caller's request.

3) *Extended absence greetings* shall be provided when the employee is scheduled to be away from the office for two or more business days. The employee's greeting shall:

a) Identify the expected period of the absence.

b) Advise the caller what to do in case of emergency.

c) Advise the caller when messages will be picked up.

d) Inform the caller if calls will be returned during the period of absence.

14. **VISITORS.** Employees shall treat visitors with dignity and respect. Employees shall conduct themselves as follows:

a. Employees shall maintain a professional image and demeanor at all times and shall not engage in boisterous conversation or discussion of DOC operational issues while in the presence of visitors.

b. Employees shall immediately acknowledge the presence of visitors.

c. When a language barrier exists, the employee shall make an attempt to find another employee who can act as an interpreter and/or use the language line service. The Command Center should be contacted for interpreter assistance within the DC Jail.

d. Employees shall make eye contact when talking and listening and remain attentive when interacting with visitors.

e. Employees shall provide visitors with an appropriate place to wait, rest, talk or do business.

15. **CORRESPONDENCE**

a. **Director's Office.** Designated individuals in the Director's Office shall promptly act on DOC correspondence when it is received to include:

1) Determining response priority and assigning a completion date.

2) Responding to the Mayor's Correspondence Unit (MCU) within forty-

eight (48) hours with relevant information/projected release date.

3) Forwarding the correspondence to the appropriate agency or individual, or preparing a response by obtaining relevant information.

4) Updating the Mayor's Intranet Quorum database each time an action is taken to resolve the issue and attaching and letters or emails responsive to the query.

b. **Designated Responder**

1) The assigned responder shall open the email and review any information provided.

2) Step-One – The responder shall open any attachments and review all information from the sender.

3) Step Two – The employee may be instructed to contact the original sender ASAP and to document the contact.

a) Attempt to make contact with the customer via email, telephone or by mail.

b) Advise the customer that the correspondence has been received.

c) If a response is not available at that time, advise the customer of an anticipated date when he/she will receive a response.

4) Step Three – The responder shall draft a response and forward it to the designated individual in the Director's office who will prepare the final submission for forwarding to the sender/MCU.

5) Electronic copies of responses should be maintained.

6) Employees shall respond within forty-eight (48) hours to correspondence sent by customers to either verify receipt of the correspondence, or whenever possible, to immediately provide the response to their query.

7) Email shall be checked throughout the workday to ensure prompt formulation of well-informed responses.

16. **DISSEMINATION**

a. This directive shall be distributed to all Department employees.

b. This directive shall be included in post orders for positions that require

regular telephone contact with the public.

c. This directive shall be read at Roll Call for three consecutive days.

d. This directive shall be discussed at staff meetings.

e. This directive shall be included in agency training curricula.

Thomas Faust
Director

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Customer Service Standards Quick Reference Guide
Attachment 2 – DOC Point of Contract Tracking System