



POLICY MANUAL

POLICY NUMBER: CORPORATE-018

SUBJECT: TELEPHONE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES STANDARDS

**POLICY STATEMENT:
(Purpose/Objective)**

To provide for standards in providing customer service to all customers of the City of Brantford.

RELATED POLICY PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES:

1.0 RESPONSE TIMES

1.1 TELEPHONE CALLS

When the Corporation of the City of Brantford is contacted by telephone the person calling can expect, 65 % of the time that:

- a) The main incoming telephone lines will be answered within 30 seconds;
- b) their call will be answered within three (3) rings, at individual lines ;
- c) their call will not be redirected more than once;
- d) they will always have the option of reaching a person.

1.2 TELEPHONE MESSAGES (voicemail or paper)

Callers can expect that their messages, either left on voicemail or in writing, will be acknowledged, 80% of the time, within one (1) business day.

1.3 WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE (Regular mail)*

Written correspondence (by regular mail) received in the conduct of the Corporation of the City of Brantford business, EXCLUDING but not limited to unsolicited materials such as training programs, promotional events, general advertising, etc. will be acknowledged, verbally or in writing, within ten (10) working days, 80% of the time.

1.4 E-MAIL AND FAX CORRESPONDENCE *

Electronic correspondence (by e-mail or fax) received in the conduct of the Corporation of the City of Brantford business, EXCLUDING but not limited to unsolicited materials such as training programs, promotional events, general advertising, etc. will be acknowledged, verbally or in writing, within two (2) working days, 80% of the time.

* The response may be a resolution but at a minimum must acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and the status of the inquiry.

2.0 CUSTOMER GREETING EXPECTATIONS

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

- a) to be served in a timely fashion and to be advised of the expected waiting time, if necessary and
- b) to be provided with information that they have requested or will be referred to the appropriate person to be advised of the next steps.

3.0 LUNCH HOUR COVERAGE

Sufficient employee resources, both appropriately trained front-line staff and supervisory staff, are available to respond to inquiries between 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. such that the other corporate-wide service standards, regarding response times and customer service greetings, are met.

4.0 TELEPHONES AND VOICE MAIL

As a basic tenant of customer service, a person rather than voice mail must be the public's first contact with the City of Brantford. 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 city facilities:

4.1 All callers must be given the option to receive personal assistance or leave a voice mail message.

4.2 Unless there is a legitimate need for confidentiality, staff must

identify themselves by their name and their department or division when answering calls. When forwarding calls, staff must identify themselves and advise the recipient they are forwarding a call.

- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 Internal use of the voice mail and e-mail systems are encouraged. Staff are required to give out the back door telephone numbers to other city staff and family members, and optionally to routine calling vendors.
- 4.6 Staff are required to empty their voice mail boxes daily to improve the efficiency of the telephone and voice mail system. The City Hall voice mail system will automatically delete saved messages after five (5) days. Voice mail systems are monitored by appointed telephone system administrators for each Department.
- 4.7 Background music must be suitable for the general public. When background music is provided by a radio station, either a local or sponsoring radio station will be selected.
- 4.8 Staff are not required to accept obscene or threatening telephone calls. Such calls should be terminated and reported to the staff person's immediate supervisor.
- 4.9 The City of Brantford has installed direct lines in several service areas to answer customer service inquiries; Customer Services - Utilities, Tax Office, Brantford Transit and recreational facilities are examples. For direct customer service lines, a front-end voice mail greeting providing generic information about basic services and hours of operation is acceptable. The name of the service area must be incorporated into the greeting.
- 4.10 Department's must establish a call forwarding procedure for each facility where a telephone and voice mail system exists, to ensure that by forwarding a call, the caller is not forwarded more than once. The practice is subject to modification based on the telephone and voice mail features.
- 4.11 Training for new employees will be the responsibility of the appointed Departmental/Divisional Telephone System Administrators.

5.0 CUSTOMER INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

It is the policy of the Corporation that an initial response time of 48 hours be established for the following types of inquiries to be tracked:

- Complaints or concerns from the public or members of Council
- Requests for action from the public or members of Council
- Items brought forward from Question Period at Council meetings

Date of Enactment: March 6, 2000	Related By-law Number/Staff Report Number: 70-2010 (consolidation)
Review and Amendment Dates: May 13, 2002 March 2009 (review) June 2010 (consolidation)	Department Responsible for Review: Communications/Customer Service SMT
Date of Next Review: 2014	Applicable Legislation/Legislative Authority: