

City of Hampton
Animal Control
Administrative Guidelines

Title: <p style="text-align:center">Customer Service</p>	Guideline Number: <p style="text-align:center">A-109</p>
References:	Date Issued: <p style="text-align:center">May 2006</p>

I. Purpose

Customer service is a corner-stone that the City builds relationships with residents. It is a strategic initiative called Customer Delight. The purpose of this policy is to provide staff with an understanding of their role while interacting with the public.

II. Policy

Employees will be courteous, respectful and well-mannered at all times when dealing with the public and fellow employees. As members of a public service organization, our employees frequently have requests or demands placed upon them. The manner in which we respond to these requests plays a significant role in how the public perceives the organization. A negative attitude displayed during the course of performing duties may adversely impact operations, impact the public's perspective and adversely impact the employee as well. All employees are expected to perform their duties in a professional manner and treat the public as they would want to be treated to the extent that it does not interfere with the division's law enforcement purpose.

On and off duty, an employee's conduct must not negatively reflect on him/her and the City Of Hampton. The employee should project a positive attitude when dealing with the public and fellow employees. Employees should not get involved in arguments with the public and should present a calm, dignified demeanor. Employees should not act in haste or with undue emotion.

III. Procedure

A. Greeting the Public in Person

1. Greet the public cheerfully with a "Good morning/afternoon, may I help you?"
2. Be polite at all times. Show that you are sincere in wanting to help.
3. Keep in mind that the general public may not know anything about our procedures. They may be emotionally upset. Treat them as you would want to be treated if you were in their place.
4. If you are engaged in a telephone conversation and a customer enters the office, acknowledge them by nodding to them to let them know that you will be with them shortly.
5. If you are engaged in a conversation with another employee and a customer enters the office, or walks up to you, assist the customer first and finish your conversation later.
6. Promote our programs. Ensure that the public understands the benefits behind our programs.

7. Keep departmental literature visible and available; education is an important factor of our division.
8. If a question is asked and you do not know the answer, do not guess. Tell the customer that you do not know and then find an employee who does have the answer. If no one is available, write the customer's name, address and telephone number down and inform him/her that you will reach them with the answer.
9. Use terminology that the public can understand. The public does not know our professional "jargon".

B. Telephone Etiquette

1. When answering the telephone, identify the office the caller has reached: "Hampton Animal Control." Second, identify yourself: "This is Officer King speaking."
2. Next, offer assistance: "May I help you?" or "How Can I help you?" or "How may I direct your call?"—whichever is appropriate. Always sound professional, courteous and friendly.
3. Use a pleasant distinct voice when answering the phone, one that you would like to hear if you were making a call. A good rule to remember when developing good telephone skills is to place yourself on the other end of the call.
4. Listen to the caller. Usually people who are calling have a need or a problem, and will start to tell you immediately what it is. Listen attentively to what they are saying. Take notes, jot down their name and use their name.
5. If they have not identified themselves at this point, ask them: "May I ask who's calling, please?" If you can help them, do so. If not, find out what they need and tell them that you are going to put them on hold while you get someone who can help.
6. If someone calls and the person they ask for is not available, ask the caller if there is something you can help them with or if you can take a message. Be sure to get the correct spelling of the name, phone number, date and time of call and the best time to call back and a brief summary of the message. Sign your name to identify who took the message.
7. If it's more convenient, tell the caller that it will take a while for you to get the information and ask if you could call them back. Be sure to get their telephone number and be especially sure to call them back with the information as soon as you have it. If you call back and no one answers the telephone, make a note of the time you called for future reference. If someone else answers, and you leave a message, be sure to get that person's name.
8. Listen carefully, get all the facts, and write them down. If you need to get clarification on something they said, ask them whatever it is you need clarification on. When necessary, interject questions such as, "Have you checked with your neighbors?" or "How long has your pet been missing?" etc.
9. If at all possible, do not place the customer on hold. If you must place the caller on hold to obtain accurate information, pick up the receiver every 60 seconds or so and let

them know that you have not forgotten them and you are still looking for the information.

10. Always use the hold button and don't just put the receiver down on the desk. Thank the caller for holding when you return.
11. If you kept the caller on hold longer than you intended, apologize by saying something like: "I'm sorry for keeping you waiting. It is especially busy at this time and it took longer than expected to get the information you requested."
12. If you need to transfer a caller, explain to the caller why you are transferring and who it is you're connecting them to. Provide the caller with a phone number in case they are accidently disconnected: "Mrs. King, I am going to connect you to Officer Smith. She can provide you with the information you need."
13. Remember you are a professional and should maintain a professional attitude when dealing with callers. Keep your cool and stay in control at all times.

C. Exceptions to Customer Service

A person will be deemed ineligible for (customer) service assistance if their conduct leads to a reasonable suspicion of intoxication, or if the person is being abusive towards staff or other members of the public.

Authorized by: 	Revision Date: September 15, 2011
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