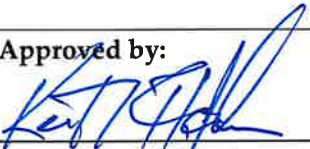
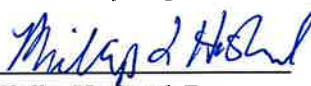


District of Columbia Department of Health <h2>Customer Service</h2>		PROCEDURE 240.500 Implementing Office: Office of the Director Training Required: No Originally Issued: March 14, 2017 Revised/Reviewed: <p style="text-align: center;">MAY 31 2023</p> (Second Revision)
Approved by:  Sharon Williams Lewis DHA, RN-BC, CPM; Interim Agency Director	Review by Legal Counsel:  Phillip Husband, Esq.; General Counsel	Effective Date: MAY 31 2023 Valid Through Date: MAY 31 2026

I. Authority	Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1996, Mayor's Order 1997-42 This policy shall supersede and replace all earlier versions of this SOP, originally issued March 14, 2017.
II. Reason for the Policy	The DC Department of Health (DC Health) is tasked with serving the public health interests of residents of, and visitors to, the District of Columbia. Satisfying its mandates requires the Department to communicate with the public directly, but also to work effectively with other District government agencies, community-based organizations, professional associations, health care providers, and a range of other stakeholders. As such, maintaining the highest standards of customer service is essential for improving public health in the District of Columbia.
III. Applicability	This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applies to all DC Health employees, contractors, interns; federal assignees, employees from sister agencies assigned to DC Health, and Summer Youth Employment Program participants, referred to collectively herein as "employees" or "DC Health employees."
IV. Policy Statement	Customer service is a shared responsibility of all DC Health managers, collectively referred to herein as "Managers" or "Program Managers" even if their specific job title differs. Program Managers are accountable for enforcing customer service standards among employees they supervise.

Program Managers shall endeavor to assign employees to cover all telephone lines that are publicly listed as the points of contact for a bureau/division, administration, or the agency at large, at a minimum Monday through Friday from 8:15 am to 4:45 pm to the greatest extent that resources allow. For units with Customer Counters, coverage shall, at a minimum, include posted customer service hours of the respective unit.

Employees assigned to receive calls from publicly listed numbers shall answer every call which comes in, respond with respect and professionalism, and route the call to the desired individual, office, or administration. Placing a caller on speaker is not permitted unless there is a legitimate business reason. In such cases, the call may only occur in areas where it cannot be heard by other customers.

Callers may be placed on hold due to call volume, or to facilitate a transfer. The employee shall explain to every caller why they are being placed on hold. Callers must remain on hold for the minimal time necessary to serve them. If a caller remains on hold after three minutes without being served, the employee who placed the caller on hold shall pick up and offer the caller the option to leave a message or remain on hold. All messages shall be delivered to the intended recipient promptly upon completion of the call.

Managers who supervise employees responsible for receiving calls from publicly listed numbers are responsible for arranging coverage during the primary employee's allotted breaks, or if the primary employee is on leave.

Outside of the applicable coverage window, a publicly listed phone with no employee assigned to answer it shall have an after-hours message activated.

All incoming calls to individual employee desk phones shall be answered promptly. Employees are required to act in a respectful and professional manner. Employees shall greet callers by identifying themselves and the agency. Desk phones shall be equipped with a standard voice mail recording for incoming calls while the employee is away from their desk. A voice mail

recording shall include, at a minimum: The name and title of the employee; the employee's and office; the employee's office hours; DC Health-issued cellular phone number (if applicable); and verification that messages left will be returned within 24 hours or following business day.

A publicly listed phone line associated with a Customer Counter shall be equipped with a standard voice mail recording for incoming calls. A voice mail recording shall include, at a minimum: the name of the unit reached, the unit's customer service hours, and verification that messages left will be returned within 24 hours or the following business day. The managers of the units overseeing direct customer service have the discretion to include additional information on the recording as appropriate such as, alternative resources available, or instructions to customers experiencing an emergency.

All voicemails where a response is requested, or indicated, shall be returned within 24 hours of receipt, or by the following business day. Any employee expecting to be out of the office for one full business day or longer shall record an out-of-office voice mail which contains, at a minimum, all of the required elements of a standard voice mail recording (see above) and the date the employee is expected to return to the office. Voice mails left should be returned within 24 hours of the employee's return to work, or the following business day.

The language in all outgoing electronic mail (email) from employee accounts shall be composed respectfully and professionally. All messages shall contain an email signature consistent with the most recent DC Health style guide, and/or specific guidance from the Office of Communications and Community Relations.

Incoming emails requesting or indicating a response should be returned within 24 hours, or the next business day.

Any employee expecting to be out of the office for one full business day, or longer, shall activate an out-of-office email response which contains the date the employee will return to the office, as well as

	<p>the phone number and email address of an alternative point-of-contact during the absence.</p> <p>All Customer Counters shall be staffed five minutes prior to the posted opening time. They are to remain staffed until the listed closing time with all customers arriving during operating hours having been served.</p> <p>Employees serving customers shall address customers with respect and professionalism. An employee's personal cellular phone shall remain on silent or vibrate mode while the employee is at a Customer Counter. Personal calls, both incoming and outgoing, may only occur away from the Customer Counter out of view of customers. Personal internet use at a Customer Counter, or within public view, is prohibited.</p> <p>Employees are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure that any photographs or video taken on a personal cellular phone does not (accidentally or deliberately) capture any customer's personal information. This includes, but is not limited to photographing, or video recording a customer (including in the background of a photograph); capturing images of documents containing personal information; or capturing personal information on a monitor. Employees who use these technologies (e.g. videoconferencing on a personal device on a lunch break) are strongly encouraged to do so away from their workstation, such as in a break area, to limit the risk of accidental violation.</p> <p>Food and beverage are not permitted at a Customer Counter or within view of customers. Smoking, including e-cigarette use, is prohibited in all DC Health facilities.</p> <p>Managers overseeing Customer Counters may, at their discretion, issue memoranda with additional customer service instructions specific to their unit and staff. These memoranda may include, for example, unit-specific telephone scripts, or frequently asked question lists to provide guidance to employees staffing a Customer Counter.</p>
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Managers who supervise employees staffing Customer Counters are responsible for ensuring coverage during the primary employee's allotted breaks, or if the primary employee is on leave.

All employees are expected to provide customer service with cultural competence. For customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or No English Proficiency (NEP), all employees are expected to provide linguistically relevant, and culturally competent customer service. Definitions of these terms, and guidance on providing linguistically relevant access, can be found in DC Health SOP 250.100 Language Access.

Persons with disabilities are legally entitled to equal access to government services. DC Health shall ensure that service areas (e.g. restrooms, drinking fountains) be architecturally accessible to individuals with disabilities. No employee may deny service to a customer based upon a disability. Wherever possible, DC Health employees will modify their procedures to provide equal access and opportunity. Examples of this assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Assistance in filling out forms;
- Explaining materials or procedures in simpler language so that individuals with cognitive, learning, or some psychiatric disabilities can easily understand them; or
- Allowing a person with a disability to apply for services over the phone if the disability prevents him or her from coming to the office.

Employees have the authority to enlist on-site security in the event a customer becomes aggressive, hostile, or threatening, either to the employee, or to another customer. Program Managers that manage Customer Counters have the authority to establish and post a unit-specific code-of-conduct for customers (e.g., restricting profanity in an area where parents and children are routinely served). The Senior Deputy Director of the administration has the authority to pre-approve such a code-of-conduct.

Employees in violation of this SOP may be subject to commensurate disciplinary action.

<p>IV. Definitions & Acronyms</p>	<p>After-hours message- A message required to be active on all unstaffed publicly-listed numbers when unstaffed outside the hours of 8:15 am – 4:45 pm. An after-hours message shall contain, at a minimum: The name of the office, bureau, or administration; the services provided at the number; the operating hours for the office; available alternatives for the caller, e.g., a cellular phone number; and special instructions, e.g., a referral to 911 for a medical emergency.</p> <p>Customer Counter- Any area in a DC Health-operated facility which facilitates a direct service to the public. The location, contact information, and operating hours of Customer Counters are routinely disseminated to external customers via a DC Health-affiliated website, social media account, or promotional materials.</p> <p>Desk phone- A phone assigned to a specific employee. Numbers to desk phones are not necessarily publicly listed.</p> <p>Publicly listed phone- A phone established as an access point for a specific program, bureau, administration, or DC Health at large. Publicly listed phones are routinely disseminated to external customers via a DC Health-affiliated website, social media account, or promotional materials.</p>
<p>VI. Procedures</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>VII. Contacts</p>	<p>Chief Operating Officer</p>
<p>VIII. Related Documents, Forms and Tools</p>	<p>None</p>