



# Corporate Policy Manual

Sub Topic: Telephone Service Standards	Policy No. CI.1-01
Topic: Corporate Standards	Employees Covered: All Employees
Section: Continuous Improvement	Council Adoption Date: September 11, 2006
Effective Date: September 11, 2006	Revision No: Date:

## Policy Statement & Strategic Plan Linkages

The Town of Newmarket supports policies that reflect sound governance and accountability through a focus on service excellence. The telephone is commonly referred to as the “people’s channel”. The majority of callers will use the telephone because of its speed and convenience. When the telephone is used well, satisfaction levels are high.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly defined standards that staff should adhere to when dealing with telephone calls.

## Procedures

### STANDARD 1:

**Callers have the option of a live response during core business hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).**

Staff who use voice mail should provide the caller with the option of leaving a message or pressing ‘0’ and speaking with another person in their work area. The employee’s name and extension number should be part of the greeting. Staff should also avoid having each other named as alternate contacts in order to avoid “voice mail circles”.

## **STANDARD 2:**

**All voice mail boxes are to be updated when an employee is out of the office.**

This is a best practice and lets callers know if an employee is out of the office and when they can expect a return call. If an employee expects to be out of the office for one or more business days, his or her voice mail greeting should reflect that he/she is out of the office. It should also advise the caller of the anticipated return date as well as identify who to contact in his or her absence.

## **STANDARD 3:**

**Telephones should be forwarded to voice mail when away from the workstation, including during non business hours.**

By forwarding telephones to voice mail the caller will go directly to voice mail without having to wait through the four rings.

## **STANDARD 4:**

**All calls should be returned within one business day with, at minimum, an acknowledgement of the call.**

This standard is a practice in most public and private sector organizations. It is understood that meeting this standard may be a challenge due to resources, but all staff should strive to meet this level of service. Senior management staff may employ administrative assistants to monitor and acknowledge calls on their behalf in order to meet this standard. Timeliness is an important driver in customer satisfaction; it is the greatest contributor to overall customer satisfaction and that which has the most room for improvement.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

Employees are responsible to:

- Avail themselves of training opportunities that support corporate telephone service standards;
- Adhere to the standards set out in this policy;
- Discuss with their supervisor any difficulties or barriers encountered in meeting corporate telephone service standards.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYER**

Supervisors/Manager/Directors/Commissioners are responsible to:

- Ensure that staff are aware of corporate telephone service standards, and other corporate standards in general;
- Provide training and coaching to help staff understand and meet the standards;
- Enforce telephone service standards through the performance evaluation process.