



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Policy Manual

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Subject: **Customer Service Policy**

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Customer Service Policy (Policy) provides a level of expectation in communicating with citizens and customers, both internally and externally, through a transparent and accountable approach.
- 1.2 Through this Policy, Employees will be empowered to provide clear, concise and accurate information and deliver services in a professional, timely and helpful manner in a variety of ways: in person, by telephone, mail, email and through the Town's website, and social media platforms.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Town Employees.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 A **Complaint** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility or staff member, where a citizen believes that the Corporation has not provided a service experience to their satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is expected.
- 3.2 **Corporation** means The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh.

- 3.3 **Customer** means residents, citizens, property owners, visitors, community groups, or businesses that are contacting any Town department requesting information or a service from the Corporation.
- 3.4 **Employee** means any person employed by the Corporation on a full time, part time, seasonal, student and/or casual basis. Also included are volunteers, contract workers and Committee members who communicate with the public and/or represent the Corporation.

4.0 Policy

- 4.1 The Corporation delivers a variety of communications to inform and raise awareness for its Customers and, as a result, encourages open dialogue and feedback. In collaboration with the Public Complaint Policy, the Corporation encourages customer service feedback and will work to address comments, suggestions, and concerns. Anonymous Complaints, with no assessed risk to life or safety, will not be followed-up on for response.
- 4.2 Employees are not expected to tolerate abusive behaviour. Employees are to report severely negative/abusive interactions or complex situations that have a potential to influence the reputation of the Corporation to their Manager/Director with the pertinent details of what transpired.
- 4.3 When an inquiry requires the attention of another department, Employees can generate a service request in Cityworks. When using Cityworks, gather all information required regarding the nature of the inquiry. All Customers should have a clear understanding of the process and who will be handling their inquiry.
- 4.4 If a general Complaint is received about a customer service experience that involves a particular Employee, the Complaint will not be generated in Cityworks, rather the Complaint will be directed to the appropriate department Director. The Complaint will be investigated within three (3) business days with a resolution provided within (15) fifteen business days, subject to legislative requirements. If an Employee has made a mistake, the Customer will receive a written apology along with the action taken to rectify the issue.
- 4.5 When providing a response, Employees will ensure it is completed in a professional manner. Employees are encouraged, where feasible and reasonable, to look for ways to meet or exceed Customers' expectations and to enhance the delivery of service. When service gaps are observed they should be communicated to the appropriate department Employee or Manager/Director.
- 4.6 The following customer service procedures shall assist Employees in maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction as well as demonstrate the Corporation's efforts in continuing to foster good governance.

5.0 In Person/Telephone Communication

- 5.1 Employees are to greet Customers immediately in a polite and friendly manner. All Customers will be treated with equality, dignity, and respect.
- 5.2 All telephone calls must be responded to within one (1) business day. If an Employee does not know the information that is being requested, a call back is required to acknowledge the Customer's inquiry and identify the Employee and department that the inquiry will be directed to.
- 5.3 Personal voicemail greetings should be up to date, courteous, provide as much information as possible, request callers to leave a detailed message and include an alternate contact should the Employee not be available or out of the office.
- 5.4 Employees should use their "Out of Office Assistant" if they are going to be away for more than one (1) business day. The message should be brief, indicate your return date into the office and include an alternate contact.
- 5.5 When taking a message for another Employee, record as much information as possible about the nature of the request, the time, full name of the caller and contact number. If an Employee is certain that the message or nature of the call will be redirected, advise the Customer of the Employee's name, position and contact information. Customers will feel empowered if they have this information and reassured that their inquiry is being addressed. All Customers should have a clear understanding of who will be handling their inquiry.

Note: All information collected and recorded is confidential and messages/notes are to be disposed of in the confidential Shred-It bins.

- 5.6 If a call needs to be transferred, Employees are to inform the caller the Employee and department name the call is being referred to. Employees should strive to transfer calls to the correct Employee/department the first time. If the Employee receiving the transfer is not available, Employees are directed to take a detailed message and provide this to the alternate contact in the designated Employee's absence.
- 5.7 Employees are requested to communicate with all Customers using plain language, speaking clearly and slowly. If the caller is challenging to understand, ask questions and repeat the issue to ensure your comprehension of the request and to be able to provide the proper information.
- 5.8 A Customer calling can be experiencing a variety of emotions: anger, frustration, anxiety, fear, etc.; it is with these Customers that an Employee should use their problem solving skills and listen. In the conversation, acknowledge the issue and person, but remain objective. Ask questions to clarify the situation and ensure the

information recorded is correct. If the caller continues to be difficult, advise them that you can forward the call to the Manager.

- 5.9 If the caller persists in being difficult, communicate to the caller that you will hang up because they are using abusive, threatening or discriminatory language. Once you have advised this, hang up the call if they do not stop the inappropriate behaviour and relay the details to your Manager/Director.

6.0 Email

- 6.1 All email correspondence should be replied to within three (3) business days upon receipt. Depending on the nature of the correspondence, an initial email response may be required to acknowledge the inquiry, and outline the expectation as to the duration of time to complete or formally answer the inquiry. If a formal decision of Council is required, the Employee will advise the Customer of this, provide the date of the Council meeting and outline that an official response will be provided within five (5) business days of the Council decision.
- 6.2 If an Employee is out of the office for more than one (1) business day, they will activate their Microsoft Outlook automatic replies (Out of Office) email notification outlining their return to the office date and provide an alternate contact for their inquiry.
- 6.3 An email that is received by an Employee that has abusive, threatening or discriminatory language, does not require a response, and will be forwarded to your Manager/Director.

7.0 Formal Written Correspondence

- 7.1 All written correspondence should be responded to within five (5) business days, subject to legislative requirements, either through a phone call or through a written letter using the contact information provided in the correspondence.
- 7.2 Written correspondence that has been received for information purposes and does not require a response, may be filed and destroyed as per the Corporation's Records Retention By-law 2018-39.
- 7.3 Any written correspondence that is received that has abusive, threatening or discriminatory language, does not require a response, and will be forwarded to your Manager/Director.

8.0 Website/Social Media

- 8.1 The Corporation's website and social media sites are used as an additional channel of communication to share information and public engagement. Policy

- No. 80 regarding Social Media outlines the standards and protocols for official responses.
- 8.2 The designated Employee must respond to internet messaging from the public in a timely manner during regular business hours or within one (1) business day. Responses will be friendly, professional and informative to strengthen community engagement. Should the request require additional research and information, the Employee will advise the poster that this is being undertaken and a response will be provided as soon as this information is known.
- 8.3 Any applications and forms submitted through the e-forms portal on the Town's website must be responded to within two (2) business days. This will provide the Customer some reassurance that the application form was received and inform them on the next steps in the process.

9.0 Meetings

- 9.1 Internal meetings are meetings organized by Employees, but may include other Employees and/or Customers, and occur within municipal facilities or off site locations. Where possible, using Microsoft Outlook, Employees are responsible for pre-booking meeting rooms, and sending an electronic meeting invitation to all attendees to confirm or decline attendance.
- 9.2 External meetings are those not hosted by the Corporation. When Employees are representing the Town at external meetings, Employees will represent the Corporation in a positive, respectful manner and provide the same levels of Customer service as they would when they are performing their regular duties in the office.

10.0 Responsibilities

- 10.1 All Directors shall be responsible for administering the Customer Service Policy. This Policy will be reviewed as required based on revisions to corporate practices.
- 10.2 This policy will be posted on the Corporation's Website.

11.0 Training

- 11.1 Customer Service training is provided to Employees within new Employee orientation sessions. When available, additional Customer service training will be offered both departmentally and corporately.

12.0 Related Documents

- 12.1 Policy No. 68 Violence and Harassment in the Workplace
- 12.2 Policy No. 66 Accessible Customer Service
- 12.3 Policy No. 80 Social Media Policy
- 12.4 Policy No. 57 Confidentiality of Information
- 12.5 Policy No. XX Public Complaints Policy