



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Policy Manual

Policy Number: 97

Effective Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Supersedes: PPC 03/19 – October 22, 2019
RCM 365/19 – November 12, 2019

Approval: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Subject: Policy 97- Customer Service Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Town of Tecumseh is committed to providing a responsive and respectful service experience to all Customers. The Customer Service Policy provides service delivery expectations to support seamless, responsive, and consistent services focusing on the customer experience.
- 1.2 Through this Policy, Employees will be empowered to provide clear, concise, and accurate information in a professional manner through multiple channels: in person, by telephone, mail, email and through the Town's website, and social media platforms.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Town Employees who are full-time, part-time, elected, or appointed officials, seasonal, co-op students or casual.
- 2.2 This Policy applies to all those responsible for delivering service on behalf of the Town including but not limited to volunteers, committee members, consultants, contractors, and partners.
- 2.3 Directors and Departmental Managers shall be responsible for maintaining adherence to this policy.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **"Cityworks"** means the software used by the Town to record customer service requests/complaints. Cityworks automatically codes and routes inquiries/complaints to the applicable department, monitors progress and generates reports to facilitate ongoing analysis and evaluation.
- 3.2 A **"Complaint"** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility, or staff member, where a Customer believes that the Town has not provided a service experience to their satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is expected.
- 3.3 **"Customer"** means residents, citizens, clients, property owners, visitors, community groups, or businesses that are requesting information or accessing services from the Town.
- 3.4 **"Employee"** means any person employed by the Town on a full time, part time, elected or appointed officials, seasonal, student and/or casual basis. Also included are volunteers, contract workers, consultants and Committee or Board Members who communicate with the public and/or represent the Town.

3.2 “**Town**” means The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh.

4. Policy

- 4.1 When providing service or a response to customers, Employees will ensure it is completed in a professional manner and meets customer service expectations of the Town. Employees are encouraged, where feasible and reasonable, to look for ways to 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.
- 4.2 The Town distributes a variety of communication to inform and raise awareness of services and initiatives for Customers and, as a result, encourages open dialogue and feedback. In collaboration with the Public Complaint Policy (No. 98), the Town encourages customer service feedback and will acknowledge or address comments, suggestions, and concerns in a responsive manner.
- 4.3 Anonymous complaints, with no assessed risk to health or safety, will not be followed-up on for response. Should an anonymous complaint present risks for health and safety, it will be reviewed by the department Director or Manager to determine the appropriate approach for follow-up.
- 4.4 When an inquiry requires documentation and follow-up or the attention of another department, Employees can generate a service request in Cityworks. When using Cityworks, Employees shall gather all information required regarding the nature of the inquiry and populate applicable fields in the software. This includes gathering contact information for follow-up correspondence as required, notably an email address which enables automated confirmation and closure notifications for Customers. All Customers should have a clear understanding of the process, estimated timelines (if applicable) and the department representative who will be handling the inquiry.
- 4.5 Employees are not expected to tolerate abusive behaviour when providing service on behalf of the Town. Severely negative/abusive interactions or complex situations should be reported to a Supervisor/Manager/Director with the pertinent details of what transpired. If applicable, an Employee Incident Report Form should be completed.
- 4.6 If a general complaint is received about a customer service experience involving a Town Employee, the complaint will not be generated in Cityworks, rather the complaint will be directed to the appropriate department Director. In the event that an Employee complaint is received

through the City Works web portal, it will be assigned to the Manager, Customer Service who will follow-up directly with the applicable department Director. Receipt of the Complaint and initial investigation will occur within three (3) business days. A resolution should be provided within (15) fifteen business days, subject to legislative requirements.

- 4.7 The customer service procedures and expectations included in this policy shall assist Employees in maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and provide seamless, responsive, and consistent services focusing on the customer experience.
- 4.8 Regular business hours as it relates to administrative services and expected response times included in this policy are Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm. Office closures in observance of statutory holidays will be communicated in advance on multiple channels including the phone menu, Town website and social media channels.
- 4.9 This policy provides comprehensive minimum standards. Departments may institute higher standards in alignment with statutory and non-statutory requirements (policy, standard operating procedures, etc.).

5. Accessibility

- 5.1 The Town of Tecumseh is committed to ensuring that people of all abilities have access to information, goods and services in a manner that respects an individual's dignity and independence.
- 5.2 When communicating, providing information, or delivering services to a person with a disability, the Town will do so in a manner that takes the person's disability and accessibility requirements into account.
- 5.3 If a person with a disability needs an accessible format, or help to communicate with the Town, Employees will work with the person to provide the format or support that will meet their needs.
- 5.4 Generally, and unless otherwise directed by policy or legislation, Employees should respond to customers in the same format used by the Customer (emails are responded to by email, letters are responded to by letter, etc.).
- 5.5 Further detail and information regarding accessible customer service standards can be found in the Accessible Customer Service Policy (No.66).

6. In-Person & Telephone Communications

- 6.1 Employees are to greet Customers immediately in a polite and friendly manner. All Customers will be treated with equality, dignity, and respect. For example, during telephone correspondence the following greetings can be used:

Thank you for calling the Town of Tecumseh, this is **INSERT NAME** speaking, how may I help/assist you?

Town of Tecumseh **INSERT NAME** speaking, how may I help/assist you?

- 6.2 A live answer option on the main phone menu (by selecting "0") will be available during regular business hours, Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm. It is the expectation for the live answer option to be staffed at all times during regular business hours.
- 6.3 Should staff be required to tend to telephone and counter inquiries simultaneously, counter inquiries will take priority with telephone inquiries tended to by another team member, a designated back up or assigned to the next available representative on the queue line. If callers leave a voicemail message on designated department extensions within the main phone menu, they will be returned promptly after the customer at the counter has departed.
- 6.4 Voicemail messages left by a customer on a direct extension must be reviewed and 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. If monitoring a voicemail inbox is part of coverage duties, departmental Managers and Supervisors will provide expectations and instructions on how to access the messages.
- 6.5 Personal voicemail greetings should be up to date, courteous, provide departmental identifiers and request callers to leave a detailed message. For example:

Hello,

You have reached **NAME & POSITION** with the Town of Tecumseh.

This is the week of **INSERT DATE RANGE**, and I am in the office, however on the phone or away from my desk. Please leave a detailed message and I will return your phone call within one business day.

Thank you,

- 6.6 Employees should record an out of office message in the 3CX phone system when away from the office for more than one (1) business day. Status within 3CX should also be changed to reflect an employee's planned or unplanned time away from the office. The recorded out of office message should indicate a return date to the office and include an alternate contact during the absence. For example:

Hello,

You have reached **NAME & POSITION** with the Town of Tecumseh.

I am currently out of the office, returning (**INSERT DATE & TIME**). Voicemail messages will be responded to upon my return. Should you require immediate assistance during my absence, please contact (**INSERT COVERAGE CONTACT & EXTENSION**).

Thank you,

- 6.7 Town Staff should do what is necessary to assist a Customer even if it is not their area of responsibility or if they have no personal knowledge of the subject matter. This may involve reviewing the Customer Service Knowledge Base on the staff intranet to field the question, taking down pertinent details concerning the issue and relevant contact information, initiating a warm transfer and/or creating a Service Request in Cityworks. It is not appropriate to say, "that's not my responsibility" or "I am unable to assist you".
- 6.8 With respect to in-person services, a warm transfer may involve accessing a subject matter expert to assist or requesting advisement from a specific department. For telephone communications, warm transfer expectations and access to technical instructions are identified in section 6.10 of this policy.
- 6.9 When taking a message or information for another Employee, record as much information as possible about the nature of the request, the time, full name of the Customer and contact number. If an Employee is certain that the inquiry, message, or nature of the call will be redirected, advise the Customer of the Employee's name, position and contact information. All Customers should have a clear understanding of who will be handling their inquiry in order to provide assurance that it will be addressed.
- Note: All information collected and recorded is confidential and messages/notes are to be disposed of in the confidential Shred-It bins.
- 6.10 If a call needs to be transferred, Employees are to inform the caller of the department and specific contact they are being referred to. Employees

should strive to warm transfer calls to the correct Employee/Department and ensure the receiving contact is available prior to transferring the call. [Warm transfer instructions](#) can be found on the staff intranet within 3CX training material. If the Employee receiving the transfer is not available, Employees are directed to offer the following options to Customers:

- a) Transfer the call to voicemail and ask the Customer to provide a detailed message for the contact. Assure the Customer the phone call will be returned within one (1) business day.
 - b) Take a detailed message and provide this to the contact or alternate in the designated Employee's absence.
- 6.11 If a call is received outside standard business hours, Customers will be notified of the regular hours of operation during a pre-recorded message on the main phone menu. Upon selecting an extension or using the dial by name directory to reach an extension, Customers will be prompted to leave a voicemail (if they wish). The message will be reviewed and responded to by staff during standard business hours.
- 6.12 Employees are requested to communicate with all Customers using plain language, moderate cadence and speaking clearly. If a customer is challenging to understand, ask questions and repeat the details to ensure comprehension of the request and ability to provide the proper information.
- 6.13 When Employees leave a voice message for a customer, it is important to leave a call-back number and extension (ex: 519.735.2184, ext. **INSERT**). Most Customers have call display and may call back via the main phone menu asking who called from the Town of Tecumseh. Leaving details for the customer will eliminate confusion regarding who to contact at the Town.
- 6.14 A Customer accessing services in-person or over the phone can be experiencing a variety of emotions, including both positive and challenging expressions. Should a Customer present with emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety, confusion, fear, etc., an Employee should use their problem-solving skills and listen. In the conversation, acknowledge the issue and remain objective when seeking to understand the concerns. Ask clarifying questions when appropriate and without interruption to ensure the information recorded is accurate. If the Customer continues to be difficult, advise them of options based on standard operating procedures within the department and ensure the approach adheres to expectations outlined within this policy. For in-person services, this may include involving an onsite subject matter expert, Supervisor or Manager. During a phone call, options may include warm transferring to a subject matter

expert, Supervisor or Manager. For both in-person and telephone communications, the Manager, Customer Service can be consulted or involved as required.

- 6.15 Should a Customer persist in being difficult, employ setting effective limits. This includes communication to the Customer that, if the inappropriate correspondence or behaviors continue (abusive, threatening, discriminatory language etc.), the service or discussion will need to end and be scheduled for another time.
- a) **In-Person:** Seek assistance from a Supervisor or Manager. Depending on the nature of the situation, a duress button (located at front counters) can be activated to request assistance and support. In the event of an immediate risk to life and safety, including medical emergencies, the designated OPP notification button located at front counters should be activated.
 - b) **Telephone:** Communicate that if the inappropriate correspondence or behaviour continues, the phone call will be disconnected. Once the Employee has advised of this, and the inappropriate correspondence or behaviour continues, communicate that the phone call will be disconnected, end the call, and relay the details to your Manager/Director.
 - c) All interactions involving escalated Customer correspondence or behaviors will be reviewed with the Department Director, Manager and/or Manager, Customer Service.
 - d) An Employee Incident Report Form should be completed any time a duress button is activated, or a call has to be disconnected due to inappropriate correspondence or behaviour from a Customer.

7. Email Correspondence

- 7.1 All email correspondence should be replied to within two (2) business days upon receipt, at minimum to acknowledge the email was received. 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.

- 7.2 If an Employee is out of the office for more than one (1) business day, the Microsoft Outlook automatic reply (Out of Office) will be activated outlining a date of return to the office and provide an alternate contact for inquiries during the absence. For example:

Hello,

Thank you for your email. I am currently out of the office returning **INSERT DATE** and will gladly respond to your email upon my return. Should you require immediate assistance during my absence, please contact **INSERT COVERAGE CONTACT, EMAIL & EXTENSION**.

Thank you,

- 7.3 An email that is received by an Employee containing abusive, threatening, or discriminatory language, does not require a response, and will be forwarded to the appropriate Director/Manager. If required, an Employee Incident Report Form should be completed.

8. Formal Written Correspondence

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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 as amended or any successor thereof.
- 8.3 Any written correspondence that is received that has abusive, threatening, or discriminatory language, does not require a response, and will be forwarded to the applicable Director/Manager. If required, an Employee Incident Report Form should be completed.

9. Website & Social Media

- 9.1 The Town's website and Social Media channels are communication platforms used to share information and serve as mediums for public engagement. The Town's Social Media Policy (No. 80) outlines standards and protocols regarding official Town responses to questions and inquiries received through Social Media channels.

- 9.2 General email inquiries received from the Town website will be responded to within two (2) business days as per section 7.1 of this policy. This includes the “Report an Issue” option where an automated confirmation is sent to the email address entered, providing the Customer assurance of the service request being received.
- 9.3 Authorized Employees will respond to requests or inquiries received via Social Media 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 or inquiry require additional research or information, the authorized Employee will advise the Customer that follow-up is required and that a response will be provided once information is known.
- 9.4 Any applications and forms submitted through the e-forms portal on the Town’s website must be acknowledged via email correspondence within two (2) business days. This includes automated confirmation responses that will provide the Customer assurance of the application or form being received and if applicable, include supplementary information or next steps.
- 9.5 Correspondence received through the Town website or Social Media channels containing abusive, threatening, or discriminatory language, does not require a response, and will be forwarded to the appropriate Director/Manager. If required, an Employee Incident Report Form should be completed.

10. Training

- 10.1 Customer Service training is provided at individual, departmental and organizational levels. This includes new Employee orientation, topic or system specific training for departments, and organization wide initiatives that support enhancing the service experience. Training objectives are reviewed with People and Culture Services to ensure content and timelines are aligned with organizational priorities and are value added for Employees.

11. Meetings

- 11.1 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 for meetings with

Customers, and sending an electronic meeting invitation to all attendees to confirm or decline attendance.

- 11.2 External meetings are those not hosted by the Town. When Employees are representing the Town at external meetings, Employees will represent the Town 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.

12. Responsibilities

- 12.1 The Manager, Customer Service, is responsible for this Policy.
- 12.2 All Directors and Managers are responsible for ensuring the Customer Service Policy is actively adhered to within departments and incorporate the strategic priorities related to service excellence into operational goals and objectives.

13. Policy Review

- 13.1 The Manager, Customer Service shall be responsible for reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure it is reflective of current standards and best practices. Necessary revisions and/or updates will be made as required.

14. References and Related Documents

- Policy No. 68 - Violence and Harassment in the Workplace
- Policy No. 66 - Accessible Customer Service
- Policy No. 80 - Social Media Policy
- Policy No. 57 - Confidentiality of Information
- Policy No. 98 - Public Complaints Policy
- Policy No. 121 - Visitor Conduct Policy
- Policy No. 122 No - Trespass Policy