

Bureau of Environmental Services

I. PRINCIPLES OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

- We provide each customer with the APPROPRIATE level of service based on the needs of the customer
- We treat our customers with respect and dignity.
- We respond to the customer in a timely fashion.
- We clearly state the options and choices the customer has.
- We work to empower the customer to solve their problems.
- We respond to the customer's issue or problem and *not to their attitude*.
- We provide the customer with a clear response, written whenever possible.
- We work cooperatively with the customer and each other to identify and implement appropriate solutions.
- We speak of customer service in terms of opportunity, not as impositions on our time.
- We recognize that our involvement with the customer is part of a long-term relationship between them and the Bureau and city government.
- We have a responsibility to the customers that are waiting as well as the customer currently in front of us.
- We are clear about the information that we do not know as well as what we know.

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR ATTAINING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- Listening Actively

While you've heard the complaint, issue or comment a thousand times before, it is unique for the customer. Listen attentively to his/her version.

If angry, frustrated, or highly emotional, acknowledge the feelings. Remember anger is usually fear in disguise. Use of paraphrasing can be useful.

- Empower the Customer

Once feelings are expressed and hopefully diffused, focus on what we CAN do, not on what they have no power to change.

- Be a Collaborator in Problem Solving

Ally yourself with solutions, and avoid adopting an adversarial or impatient approach. Beware of antagonistic body language. Most importantly, remain open to the possibility that the property owner has a legitimate problem you can help to solve.

- When you don't have an answer. Be clear about it. Find out and follow through.

Let the customer know what to expect, what you are going to do and when you or another will get back to them. If you delegate the task to someone else, check back either with the customer or your colleague to make certain the issue has been resolved.

- When the answer is NO.

No can be an acceptable answer. If it is the right answer, don't be hesitant to say it clearly, with an explanation. Be clear, giving the property owner a route of appeal, if necessary.

Don't be overly concerned if the customer goes to a "higher authority" or the Commissioner's Office.

Document your response and the reasons for it. Sometimes your decision is reversed; don't take it personally. Sometimes it indicates a different set of facts or perspectives. It doesn't mean your answer was wrong.

Keep your sense of humor.

Expectations/Service standards

1. Respond to voice mail same day or at very least 24 hours
2. Keep voice mail message current and relevant
3. Respond to written questions in writing
4. Provide appeal information with decisions
5. Explain a policy when providing it
6. Do not "blame"
7. No "blind referrals". Contact the one you have referred a customer to explain the reason for the referral.
8. Provide information regarding the quality of the data used for a determination of sewer service, especially if its in doubt.
9. Meet turn-around times, if there is a reason that you can't meet them, make sure the customer knows when they can expect to hear from you.