



Title:	Customer Service Policy		
Policy Group: Your Government and People	Policy Administrator: Community Services, Programs & Initiatives		
Resolution No. CW-242-2022	Policy Number: CSPI-05		
Approval Date: 2022-09-15	Revision Date: 2026-09-15		

1. Policy Statement

- a) The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward (hereafter "The County") is committed to delivering exceptional, equitable and accessible customer service.
- b) Staff will provide the best customer service possible and are empowered to make decisions to ensure that each customer experience is meaningful, fair and respectful. The County recognizes that the success of the County depends on the ability to work and perform functions in the most effective and efficient ways, balancing the needs of the individual with the overall needs of the County.

2. Purpose

- a) The purpose of the Policy is to:
 - i. Raise awareness of the necessity and importance of achieving customer service excellence as part of the day-to-day operations of the municipality.
 - ii. Ensure interaction and communications with all customers is prompt, respectful, friendly, and sensitive to customers' concerns with a goal of satisfying customers' needs.
 - iii. Ensure consistent customer service standards are applied by all employees, throughout the corporation.
 - iv. Define clear roles to ensure consistent administration and maintenance of the municipality's customer service protocols.

3. Scope

- a) This policy applies to all forms of customer service by County employees to the community, and appropriate conduct by customers requesting information, a service, filing a complaint or compliment, or providing feedback, and includes but is not limited to online, electronic, print and verbal communications.
- b) Interaction and communication with people with disabilities as well as their service animals and support personnel will be compliant under the criteria as mandated under the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Regulation 429/07* and the County's Accessible Customer Service Policy.

4. Legislative Authority

- a) N/A

5. Definitions

- a) Customer means any person who receives or seeks to receive goods or services from a person or organization in the private, public and nongovernmental sector. Customer includes persons who involuntarily receive goods or services imposed by an external authority.
- b) Internal Communications Team means representatives for customer service and communications business unit within each respective work area. Staff will support the Customer Service Coordinator and Communications and Consultation Supervisor by providing continuous feedback and guidance in order to achieve customer service excellence.

6. General

- a) Interaction and all forms of communications with all customers will be prompt, respectful, sensitive to customers concerns, and friendly with a goal of satisfying the customer's needs.
- b) All first point of contact employees will take ownership of the customer's inquiry and attempt to find a solution or appropriate response, where possible.
- c) In-person customers will take precedence over telephone calls.
- d) In person
 - i. Attend to walk-in customers immediately.
 - ii. Serve customers in the order in which they appear, except when a customer has a scheduled appointment.

- e) Written correspondence (letters, memos, faxes, etc.)
 - i. Respond to email by end of next business day.
 - ii. Respond to high priority (related to non-emergency public safety) emails within one business day.
 - iii. Ensure automatic or same business day acknowledgments for high volume areas or when unable to respond fully within the required amount of time. Provide a response time estimate based on the complexity of the inquiry and availability of staff.
 - iv. Respond to faxes, letters and memos as required.

- f) After-hours inquiries
 - i. All after-hours high priority or public safety issues should be directed to a supervisor or manager on duty.
 - ii. In accordance with the County's Disconnect from Work Policy, employees may respond to general inquiries received during non-business hours (evenings, Saturdays, Sundays, and statutory holidays) within two business days of the next business day.

- g) Voice Mail
 - i. Employees will change their voice mail message as required to reflect their current attendance, including changing the message from home if sick.
 - ii. All messages will be consistent, identify a back-up name and number and use the templates provided.
 - iii. Employees will initialize the system with their own name, title and extension.
 - iv. Voice mail messages will be responded to by the end of the next working day.

- h) E-mail
 - i. Employees will use the "out of office assistant" tool when on vacation or absent from the office for a full day or more. The out of office assistant message will identify a back-up name and e-mail address.
 - ii. E-mail messages that request information or service will be acknowledged and responded to by the end of the next working day.
 - iii. For recipients of e-mails sent and copied to a distribution list or string of people, a response may not be necessary and needs to be determined on a case by case basis.
 - iv. When forwarding e-mails be aware of an extended string and delete where appropriate.
 - v. When responding to a request for information or action from a member of council, copy all members of council with your response.

- vi. E-mail messages sent from the County of Prince Edward will:
- Include a subject line that clearly identifies the content
 - Include a formal salutation
 - Be written in plain, professional language
 - Avoid slang, jargon, acronyms
 - Be accurate and concise
 - Include the sender's full name, position and contact information
 - Clearly title all attachments (not image)
 - Be forwarded internally only for municipal business or externally only with permission of the sender
 - If forwarded, include an introduction and explanation
 - If asking for action, request a response
 - Do not include personal taglines, messages, graphics or backgrounds
 - Include the standard disclaimer
 - Be conscious of municipal freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation
 - Include the following in the signature line:
“this communication is intended for the addressee indicated above. The information contained in the e-mail will be used for municipal purposes and will be managed in accordance with *the municipal act and the Municipal Freedom Of Information And Protection Of Privacy Act*. If you have received this in error, please notify us immediately.”

7. Responsibility and Implementation

- a) Council is responsible for approving and making changes to this Policy.
- b) The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for
 - i. directing compliance and resolving any conflicts with this Policy;
 - ii. assigning appropriate service departments for the application of this Policy;
 - iii. establishing procedural guidelines; and
 - iv. making routine changes to the Policy, as required.
- c) All County employees are responsible for understanding and applying the associated Customer Service Procedures, and any other associated By-Laws, Policies and Procedures associated with internal or external customer service as outlined below.
- d) All managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees are advised of and understand the application of the County's Customer Service Policy and associated procedures, as well as enforcing consistent application of this policy and related Customer Service Procedures.

- e) To ensure prompt and appropriate referrals:
 - i. new employees, resigned or retired employees, or changes to employees' responsibilities or location will be communicated to all employees by e-mail.
 - ii. contact information, including cell and pager numbers, for all employees shall be kept current and available to all employees.

- f) The Corporate Communications and Consultation Supervisor is responsible for:
 - i. providing oversight, support and approval to the Corporate Customer Service Coordinator and the Internal Communications Team.
 - ii. providing guidance in the maintenance and implementation of both this policy and the municipality's Customer Service Procedures.
 - iii. will continually monitor this policy, as well as review the County's Customer Service Procedures on an annual basis, and update as necessary.

- g) The Corporate Customer Service Coordinator, in partnership with the Corporate Communications and Consultation Supervisor and the Communications Team, is responsible for:
 - i. working with employees and managers to ensure Customer Service Procedures are applied consistently throughout the organization.
 - ii. monitoring and maintaining the County's Customer Service Procedures.
 - iii. identifying any gaps in the application of Customer Service Excellence and proposing potential solutions.
 - iv. notifying the appropriate manager if an employee continues to violate either this policy or the County's Customer Service Procedures.

- h) The County's Communications Team:
 - i. will use a team approach to continuously update and apply the Municipality's Customer Service Procedures in order to maintain proactive and consistent Customer Service Standards across the organization.
 - ii. will act as advocates for Customer Service Excellence within their respective work areas, promoting various Customer Service initiatives and training opportunities.

8. Documentation and Forms

- a) Customer Service Procedures