

SECTION: 1.33

SUBJECT: External Customer Service

AUTHORITY: Sections 23.30 and 110.1082 Florida Statutes, Executive Director

Policy:

Commission employees are expected to courteously and promptly assist Commission customers and stakeholders to resolve questions or problems they may have in matters relating to the Commission, its programs and/or fish and wildlife in general. Customers will be treated with patience and respect with employees working to ensure each encounter is as positive as possible. Employees should seek to garner public support for agency objectives and programs by serving Florida's citizens in a positive and proactive manner and by listening to what the customer wants and striving to meet their needs. Employees will, when appropriate, explain to customers the reasons for agency actions and decisions always ensuring we communicate a consistent FWC point-of-view.

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1.33.1 Responsiveness

- A.** Employees shall acknowledge receipt of telephonic or electronic questions or requests by the end of the next business day and respond within five working days, except as provided in Sections 1.33.5 and 1.33.6. If a response to a telephonic or electronic question cannot be formulated within five working days, the customer will be advised of the delay and informed when a response should be expected.
- B.** Employees shall respond to customers in a courteous and polite manner and provide available information, except information which is confidential pursuant to any state or federal law.
- C.** Employees shall not be expected to tolerate abuse or unacceptable language from customers. In such instances, it is appropriate to request the person speak in a reasonable tone of voice and refrain from offensive language or offensive behavior. If, after given a reasonable opportunity, the person refuses to do so, the communication may be terminated. Threats of violence

- should be taken seriously and reported to a chain-of-command supervisor.
- D.** Each employee who answers a Commission telephone shall identify the Commission and provide other identifying information such as the division or program if appropriate. Employees should speak distinctly and pleasantly, presenting through their manner and tone the image of an efficient and willing public employee. If unable to assist the caller, employees are to either transfer the caller to the appropriate person or, if unsure to whom the caller should speak, to ask for the caller's name and phone number and have the appropriate person return the call. Callers should not be transferred unless the employee is certain the person to whom they are sending the call will be able to assist the caller. Callers should be given the option of leaving a message if the person to whom they are being transferred is unavailable; if the caller indicates they do not want to leave a voice mail employees should inform the caller the person is unavailable and request the person's name and number so they can have the person return the caller's call.

1.33.2 Office Staffing

Supervisory personnel shall schedule clerical and support staff working hours to ensure all offices designated as public contact offices are adequately staffed during the period from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Employees who will be away from their office or work unit during normal work hours shall advise their supervisor and/or support staff where they will be, how they can be contacted and when they will return.

1.33.3 Customer Complaints

- A.** The FWC Inspector General (IG) is responsible for receiving and facilitating resolution of customer complaints alleging employee misconduct, fraud, waste, mismanagement, and other abuses including unsatisfactory treatment by Commission employees.
- B.** Employees who receive complaints shall take the following actions:
- 1.** Complaints Received by Phone
 - a.** Inform the complainant the IG's Office will investigate the complaint in accordance with the process and procedure outlined in IMPP 1.8, Office of Inspector General.
 - b.** Obtain the complainant's name and contact information including the complainant's address and phone number(s). The complainant is not required to give specific information concerning the complaint. If the complainant does not wish to provide contact information, provide the complainant with the phone number and address of the IG's Office.
 - 2.** Complaints Received by Mail or Electronically
 - a.** Complaints received by mail or electronically must be acknowledged by the close of the next business day. An employee who receives a complaint should contact the complainant in the most expeditious manner available and inform them the complaint has been forwarded to the FWC Inspector General's Office in accordance with agency policy. The complainant should be provided with contact information

for the IG's Office. A standard reply is available on the *Ask FWC* Website.

3. Complainants shall have 24-hour access to file a complaint through the IG's Internet Complaint Form on the Commission Web site.
4. Complaints submitted to the *Ask FWC* site naming a sworn employee must be forwarded to the IG via e-mail and deleted from the knowledge base. If appropriate, complaints will be tracked via the FWC Correspondence Control. Employees may consult with the OED Correspondence Control Coordinator to determine whether the complaint should be added to the system.
5. Complaints submitted to the Executive Director or Commissioners shall be tracked to the D/O for response with copies to the Inspector General and Legal Offices.

1.33.4 Voice Mail

- A. Employees shall not use voice mail when at their regularly assigned workstation, except when speaking on the telephone or conducting other official business which precludes interruption and/or the voice mail system offers access to another employee or automatically transfers the call to another employee.
- B. Employees, when away from their desk for more than two business days, shall leave a voice recording to advise callers they are out of the office and their planned return date.

1.33.5 E-mail

Employees are expected to respond to customer e-mails within five business days. Employees who will not access their agency e-mail account for more than two business days shall enable the e-mail out-of-office response to advise customers they are out of the office and their planned return date. The message shall provide the name(s), e-mail address(es) and phone number(s) of other FWC employees who may be contacted for immediate assistance.

1.33.6 Correspondence Control (Tracker) Items

- A. Correspondence Control (Tracker) items shall be responded to within ten working days of receipt by the Division or Office (D/O) Administrative Assistant (AA) except that e-mail responses shall be responded to within five working days and legislative shall be responded to within seven working days.
- B. Extensions shall be granted based on the complexity of the issue and the magnitude of the request. D/O AA Tracker Coordinators shall request extensions from the OED Tracker Coordinator as soon as staff determines the volume of the request and the expertise required. If an extension of more than one week past the original due date is required, an interim response via e-mail, telephone or in writing should be provided to the author acknowledging receipt of the correspondence and advising when a response can be expected.
- D. Employees shall provide a signed original or copy of the written response or

action taken for the final resolution of the issue to the OED Tracker Coordinator.

1.33.7 Ask FWC Knowledge Base

- A.** Employees are expected to use the *Ask FWC* knowledge base to improve the accuracy and timeliness of Commission responses to customers. Employees shall use the *Ask FWC* knowledge base site on the Commission web site to find and provide answers to routine and frequently asked questions (FAQ's).
- B.** When a question is generated by a customer, the knowledge base system will automatically deliver an acknowledgement of receipt to the customer. Employees will review customer requests submitted to the knowledge base promptly upon receipt and/or notification of receipt and, where additional expertise is required to provide a response, immediately re-assign the question to the appropriate knowledge base staff for response.
- C.** Employees will provide the information requested by the customer within five working days of the date the question was submitted by the customer, unless the customer has been provided with an interim response advising of the actions being taken to provide the information and when a final response should be expected.
- D.** Employees designated as knowledge-base staff, when unable to access the system for more than two business days, shall alert their division, office and section coordinators they will be out of the office and when they plan to return and/or have a process in place to ensure questions are reviewed during their absence.
- E.** Employees must document the response or other description of the final resolution of the issue in the knowledge base system.
- F.** Instructions for using the *Ask FWC* knowledge base will be posted on the FWC Customer Service Site on the FWC intranet.

1.33.8 Public Record Requests

Requests for public records shall be handled promptly and in accordance with Chapter 119, Florida Statutes and IMPP 1.7, Public Records and the Public Records Checklist located on the IT intranet site.

1.33.9 Reports and Measures

- A.** The following information shall be provided in agency documents and reports. The Director of the Office of Planning and Policy Coordination shall determine the appropriate forum(s) for each item and work with D/Os as needed to obtain the required information.
 - 1.** Customer service goals.
 - 2.** Measures of customer satisfaction.
 - 3.** Statistical data provided by the Office of Inspector General detailing the number and resolution of complaints in a 12-month period.
- B.** Directors shall consider customer service data when establishing goals and measures for their D/Os.

- C. Employees whose job duties include direct contact and service to the public shall, as part of their annual performance appraisal, be rated on their effectiveness in dealing with the public.

1.33.10 Employee Training

Within six-months of implementation of the policy new employee orientations will provide a segment detailing the agency's expectations for satisfactory customer service. Additionally, employee will be required to complete the People First on-line Customer Service Training when the training segment is activated in the People First system. *Ask FWC* knowledge based training will be coordinated by the FWC Customer Service Section. Correspondence Control training will be coordinated by the Office of the Executive Director.

History: Est. 01/19/2007

APPROVED:

Victor J. Heller
Executive Director or Designee

January 19, 2007
Date