

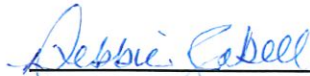
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 2023-53

SUBJECT: Telephone and Voicemail Standards

DATE ISSUED: March 27, 2023

DATE EFFECTIVE: March 27, 2023

APPROVED:



Debbie Zabell, City Manager

SECTION ONE – PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the City's expectations of telephone and voicemail usage. The City's telephone and voicemail systems are customer service tools that enable the public to communicate with the City and to receive timely assistance. These systems are intended to promote prompt and courteous customer service and are for official City use only. This policy is to establish parameters for appropriate use of the City's telephone and voicemail systems.

SECTION TWO – DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED:

The scope of this policy includes all departments and all users of the telephone systems, to include but not limited to traditional stationary telephones, mobile phones, software-based phones, conference services, and voicemail.

SECTION THREE – DEFINITIONS:

All communication devices for the purposes of this policy are defined as: All telephones, equipment, voicemail, and messages contained within the voicemail are the property of the City.

All public information for the purposes of this policy are defined as: Any information that the City discloses, disseminates, or makes available to the public.

SECTION FOUR – POLICY:

All communication devices are intended for calls related to the activities of the City. Telephones, equipment, voicemail, and messages contained within voicemail are the property of the City. The Information Technology Services Manager is responsible for negotiating, procuring, and installing all communication devices for the City. The manager is also responsible for the administration of telephone and voicemail accounts.

The following uses are unacceptable and unauthorized under this policy:

1. To convey obscene, harassing, or offensive messages.

2. Unauthorized entry into a voicemail.
3. Broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, or other non-business related matters.
4. To solicit or conduct business for personal gain.
5. Making personal calls that are non-emergent.

Telephones

Privacy of data

All employees shall ensure that internal information not designated as public information shall be shared only with other City employees and only with those employees with need-to-know basis in order to preform their job duties. Prior to releasing any information to another employee, if that employee's need-to-know is in question, ask your supervisor for clarification.

SECTION FIVE – TELEPHONE:

All employees are expected to be courteous, convey professionalism and assist all customers with their inquiries or concerns. If you do not have the answer readily available or do not know the answer, let the caller know you will find the information and someone will call them back if it will be more than a brief hold. Ensure to get their full name, phone number and the information they are looking for, as well as letting them know someone will call back by the end of the next business day. All employees should be answering the phone within 3 rings. If another individual calls while you are on the line with someone else or at the counter, be sure to put that person on a brief hold, ask the new caller if they can be placed on hold and then return to the first caller. All greetings must involve the information in this example:

“Thank you for calling City of Toppenish this is *your name*, how may I help you?”. If the person has called the wrong employee for their question let them know the best person for them to talk to. Then ask to place them on hold to try and get ahold of that employee for them. If they do not have time to wait take a brief message and let them know someone will be in contact as soon as possible.

Note: When transferring a call to another employee wait for them to answer the phone, let them know who is calling, and ask if they have time for you to transfer them. If they are unavailable take a message to pass on to them when they become available. Ensure that you get their name, phone number, and a brief description of why they are calling.

SECTION SIX – VOICEMAIL:

Due to the impersonal nature of voicemail, it should only be used for those rare instances when you are unable to answer the phone, it shouldn't be used for screening calls. All voicemails shall be responded to within 24 hours to ensure that our response time conveys our care for other people's time and that level of professionalism we strive for. If it is going to require research time, call the individual back to let them know the message has been received and that you are needing to look into it. Be sure to give them a timeline

of when they can expect to hear back from you. All employees are responsible for maintaining the review, response, deletion and capacity of their voicemail. All voicemail boxes must be set up with a personal greeting stating the following information:

1. Your full name, position, and City of Toppenish
2. Ask them to leave a message with their name, callback number and a brief description of the reason for their call.

When you are going to be out of the office on planned leave or work trip either forward your phone to your supervisor/whoever will be taking over your duties while you are away or change your voicemail greeting so that it states that you are out of the office from this date to that date and who they should call if they need immediate assistance. This change should be made at the end of the last day prior to your absence.

Privacy of Data

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are abiding by HIPAA standards and all City security protocols. Prior to transferring any voicemail messages, the employee releasing the information must ensure that no confidential or sensitive information is being released. Internal information shall be shared only within the city and only with employees with need-to-know basis in order to perform their job duties.

