



# POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Subject:** Telephone Policy

**Index:** Staff Facilities and Services

**Number:** 1004-1

**Effective Date:** 7/21/04

**Prepared By:** Finance & Administrative Services

**Supersedes:** 6/19/04

**Approved By:** 

1.0 **PURPOSE:**

2.0 **ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:** All City Departments and Service Contractors and Agencies.

3.0 **REFERENCES:** None

4.0 **POLICY:**

4.1 The City's telephone systems and fax machines are intended only for City business.

4.2 All telephone calls will be answered within 3 rings.

4.3 All telephone messages will be answered within 8 business hours.

4.4 Voice mail messages will be reviewed at least every 24 hours.

4.5 After 3 rings, calls will be forwarded to another staff member or voice mail.

4.6 Auto attendant announcements will conform to the standards outlined within Section 6 of this policy.

4.7 Voice mail announcements will be uniform in nature and conform to the standards outlined within Section 6 of this Policy.

4.8 The use of a telephone answering machine in lieu of voice mail may only be authorized by the Director of Finance & Administrative Services. Answering machines will conform to the standards outlined within Section 6, Procedures, of this Policy.

4.9 The Finance Department will administer the communications function.

## 5.0 **DEFINITIONS:**

- 5.1 Answering machine. A machine without voice mail system features utilized to answer incoming calls to an extension/employee.
- 5.2 Auto Attendant Answering System. A telephone answering system utilized to answer all incoming calls to a City facility.
- 5.3 Night Voice Mail. Automated telephone answering feature without any call transfer capabilities which is designed for use when City facilities are closed.
- 5.4 System Operator/Receptionist. An employee whose responsibilities include monitoring and operating an auto attendant answering system. Included are employees who are responsible for answering a major City facility's main published telephone number.
- 5.5 Voice Mail. Automated telephone answering system utilized during working hours.

## 6.0 **PROCEDURES:**

### 6.1 Auto Attendant Systems

- 6.1.1 Systems are currently operating at the Utilities and Negocio Buildings at 380 Pico and 910 Negocio.
- 6.1.2 Systems will be programmed to answer on the first ring.
- 6.1.3 System announcements will immediately state the facility, department and divisions reached and operating hours and days.
- 6.1.4 Announcements will provide the caller with instructions to transfer immediately to the system operator/receptionist.
- 6.1.5 When City facilities are closed, extensions will be forwarded to voice mail system. The system will be set to answer within 3 rings, state that the facility is closed, advise when it will reopen, and provide a number to dial in the event of an emergency.

### 6.2 Voice Mail

- 6.2.1 Individual extensions will be forwarded to voice mail if calls cannot be personally answered within 3 rings.
- 6.2.2 A universal voice mail message will be used by all employees with the voice mail feature. The universal voice mail message is, "You have reached the voice mail of (name), (position), with the (division) of the (department). I am either on the phone or away from the office at the present time. Please leave a message & I will return your call as soon as possible. If you would like to speak to (name or position of

employee to whom the voice mail box is defaulted), press (03) and you will be transferred.”

6.2.3 Voice mail boxes will default to a staff member within the same Division. The staff member must be sufficiently trained to answer routine questions and requests for information.

6.2.4 When out of the office for more than one working day, staff will change the voice mail announcement to include the person who will assist the caller in the interim.

### 6.3 Night Voice Mail

6.3.1 Staff with the night voice mail feature will forward to night voice mail at the end of the work day. Employees will test the line to ensure that the line is forwarded to the voice mail system. All night voice mail systems will be deactivated at the start of each work day.

6.3.2 Night voice mail announcements will state the department and division(s) reached, when the facility will open, and the operating hours. Announcements will advise the caller that a message may be left for a return call at the start of the next business day.

6.3.3 Messages left on night voice mail will be reviewed upon the start of the next working day and immediately answered by responsible staff.

### 6.4 Answering Machines

6.4.1 Machines will be programmed to answer within 3 rings.

6.4.2 Announcements will state the facility, department/division reached, operating hours, and name of the employee to whom the extension is assigned.

6.4.3 Announcements will provide the caller with instructions on how to immediately reach a responsible staff member.

6.4.4 Requests for use of answering machines will be made in writing to the Director of Finance & Administrative Services with a copy forwarded to the Finance Division. If you have a recording feature on the answer machine, FCC law prohibits the recording of telephone communication without the person's prior knowledge.

### 6.5 General Use

6.5.1 When leaving the office, staff without voice mail will forward calls to another staff member.

6.5.2 An extension will be forwarded to a line which is answered by an employee. Extensions will not be transferred to unattended lines or voice mail.

6.5.3 No extension will be forwarded without prior notice to the receiver.

6.5.4 Vendors and other customers will be directed to utilize the pay phones at City facilities. Should the need arise to utilize the City's phone system; no charges will be incurred by the City.

6.5.5 All requests for changes, additions or deletions to existing communication lines will be forwarded by the Division Manager to the Finance Division. The request will include justification for the change and an identified funding source for the installation and charges associated with the new line for the remainder of the fiscal year.

## 6.6 Transferring Calls

6.6.1 Before transferring a call to another staff member, staff will provide the caller with the complete name, position and telephone number of the staff member responsible for addressing the issue/request.

## 6.7 Line Charge Review

6.7.1 The City recognizes that personal calls may occur occasionally, however the employee will be responsible for any charges for personal calls.

6.7.1.1 On a monthly basis, bills will be forwarded to Division Managers for distribution. Employees will review the monthly bill, identify any personal calls, and remit payment to the City of San Clemente.

6.7.1.2 Managers are responsible for the use of telephone lines assigned to their division and must review and authorize the payment of the monthly bill. All bills are to be returned to the Finance Division with the date and manager's signature to certify that all telephone use is in accordance with policy.

6.7.1.3 Managers will forward questions or concerns regarding the origin of a call to the Finance Division.

6.7.1.4 Any suspected fraudulent or illegal use of the City's phone systems will be referred to the Finance Division for investigation.

## 6.8 Use of Cellular Phones

6.8.1 The City Manager shall assign certain employees cellular phones which shall be kept in the possession of the employee and used for carrying out City-related duties and responsibilities.

6.8.2 Cellular phones are to be used for official business. Individuals authorized to have cellular phones may make a reasonable number of personal calls; however, they shall reimburse the City for the cost of those calls.

6.8.3 Cellular phones may be issued to individual employees for use while traveling away from the City for business purposes.

- 6.8.4 Employees who occasionally need to use their personal cell phone for City business may opt to receive an allowance in lieu of a City-issued cell phone. Employees are required to provide a memo to the Assistant City Manager providing the requested allowance amount and estimated time their phone is used for City business.
- 6.8.5 Charges for personal calls made from cellular phones will be reimbursed to the City through the same procedure identified within Section 6.7.
- 6.8.6 Charges for cellular phones damaged, lost or stolen through negligence will be reimbursed by the assigned employee.
- 6.8.7 Individuals found to be violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

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