
EPA Classification No.: CIO 2171-S-01	CIO Approval Date: 1/24/2008
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*Issued by the EPA Chief Information Officer,
Pursuant to Delegation 1-19, dated 07/07/2005*

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND PUBLIC ACCESS STANDARDS

1. PURPOSE

All across EPA, people continue working hard to achieve the mission of the Agency, and in doing so, to serve their ultimate customers, the people of the United States. EPA's Customer Service and Public Access Standards were established to help all who work at the Agency do an even better job of serving all EPA's customers, both external and internal.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

These standards apply to EPA's commitment to serving its customers and interacting with the public. These standards do not apply where legal requirements take precedence, such as Freedom of Information Act inquiries.

3. AUDIENCE

All EPA employees.

4. BACKGROUND

EPA developed its customer service standards to achieve the mandate of the Government Performance & Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), which has as two of its purposes:

- "improve the confidence of the American people in the capability of the Federal Government, by systematically holding Federal agencies accountable for achieving program results, [and]
- improve Federal Program effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a new focus on results, service quality and customer satisfaction."

Additionally, Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, September 11, 1993 directed all Federal agencies to put customer service standards in place, use customer feedback to measure how well they were performing against those standards, and report to the public about that performance. All Federal agencies also were urged to make information more understandable and easily accessible.

5. AUTHORITY

Government Performance & Results Act of 1993 (GPRA)
Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, September 11, 1993
CIO Policy 2171.0 Information Access Policy

6. STANDARD

EPA Customer Service Standards represent the overarching goals of the Agency for its customer service performance. These standards are for all EPA employees to use in serving all external and

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internal customers. The Customer Service Standards are the basic building blocks that apply to any activity that serves external and internal customers.

Customer Service Standards

1. Be helpful! Listen to your external and internal customers.
2. Respond to all phone calls by the end of the next business day.
3. Respond to all correspondence within 10 business days.
4. Make clear, timely, accurate information accessible.
5. Work collaboratively with partners to improve all products and services.
6. Involve customers and use their ideas and input.

EPA Public Access Standards apply to requests for general information from the public. They do not apply where legal requirements take precedence, such as Freedom of Information Act inquiries. They are in addition to the Customer Service Standards and should be utilized as guiding principles as they apply to working with the general public. For purposes of this standard, "we" refers to EPA.

EPA Public Access Standards

1. We will strive to make information available through a variety of channels, including electronic media and intermediaries, such as, community organizations and local libraries.
2. We will hold ourselves accountable for a satisfactory response by providing mechanisms (e.g., mailbox e-mail address, general phone numbers, access to a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) database) for reporting back on the quality of our responses and referrals.
3. When customers write to us (via mail, fax or computer), we will mail a response within ten business days of receipt. If we need more time to research the answer, we will contact the customer within those ten days to tell her/him when to expect our response and who the contact person is.
4. When customers telephone us, we will:
 - Provide public information telephone hot lines as appropriate, which will help route inquiries.
 - Answer the call promptly and courteously.
 - Make every effort to answer questions immediately or make the appropriate referrals. Where that is not possible, we will provide a timetable for responding during the initial conversation.
5. When customers contact us via computer:
 - We will provide a single address for connection to EPA resources on the Internet [<http://www.epa.gov>].
 - We will provide descriptions, including source and known quality, of data made available electronically.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

None provided.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

None provided.

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9. DEFINITIONS

"Customer" refers to an individual or entity that is directly served by a department or agency.

10. WAIVERS

Not applicable.

11. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

For other procedures or standards relating to Information Access, refer to CIO 2171-P-01 Information Access Procedures.

12. MATERIAL SUPERSEDED

Not applicable.

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information about this Policy, please contact the Policy and Program Management Branch of the Information Access Division in Office of Information Analysis and Access, Office of Environmental Information.



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