



Policy Title:	Customer Service Standards Policy
Policy Number:	088
Department:	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Division:	Strategic Communications
Approval Date:	April 8, 2025
Approval:	Corporate Leadership Team

1. Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Town of Essex is committed to providing exceptional, responsive, and accessible customer service to all residents and stakeholders.

2. Purpose

This Customer Service Policy is intended to define the standards and expectations for how the Town of Essex will provide the best customer service possible and ensure that each customer experience is meaningful, fair, and respectful while complying with our policies, by-laws, and regulations. It serves to create a consistent, positive, and responsive environment for all who engage with the Town through in-person interactions, by telephone, mail, or email and through the Town's website, social media, and digital platforms.

3. Scope

- This Policy applies to all Town of Essex Employees and hired contract positions.
- This Policy applies to all those responsible for delivering service on behalf of the Town including, but not limited to, volunteers, consultants, contractors, and partners.
- Directors and Division Managers shall be responsible for maintaining adherence to this policy.
- This policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years from the date it becomes effective, and/or sooner at the discretion of the CAO or designate.

4. Definitions

"Customer" – includes, but is not limited to, residents, individuals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, stakeholders, developers, community, and corporate organizations that interact with the Town and its employees.



“Employees” and **“Staff”** - include full-time, part-time, seasonal, contract, students or casual employees.

“Report a Problem” – Service request platform utilized for the intake of concerns and complaints from the public.

“Town” – The Town of Essex

5. Interpretation

Any reference in this policy to any statute or By-Law, or any section of a statute or By-Law shall, unless expressly stated, be deemed to be reference to the statute or By-Law as amended, replaced, re-enacted, or restated from time to time. Any references to a Town policy shall be deemed to be a reference to the most recent passed policy and any replacements thereto.

6. General Policy Conditions

Customer Service Standards

- When interacting with members of the public, all employees are required to be pleasant, respectful, honest, helpful and meet the customer service expectations outlined in the Customer Service Policy. Employees are encouraged to provide the highest level of service possible in compliance with the Town’s policies, By-Laws, and regulations.
- The Town encourages customer service feedback and will acknowledge or address comments, suggestions, and concerns in a responsive manner. When service gaps are observed they should be communicated to the appropriate department Employee or Manager/Director. Anonymous complaints, with no assessed risk to health or safety, will not be followed up on for response, but action may be taken. Should an anonymous complaint present risks for health and safety, it will be reviewed by the department Director, or Manager, to determine the appropriate approach for follow-up.
- When an inquiry requires documentation and follow-up or the attention of another department, Employees can generate a service request in the service request software. When using the system, Employees shall gather all information required regarding the nature of the inquiry and populate applicable fields in the software. This includes gathering contact information for follow-up correspondence as required, notably an email address which enables automated confirmation and closure notifications for Customers. All Customers should have a clear understanding of the process, estimated timelines (if applicable) and the department representative who will be handling the inquiry.

- Employees are not expected to tolerate abusive behaviour when providing service on behalf of the Town. Severely negative/abusive interactions or complex situations should be reported to a Supervisor/Manager/Director with the pertinent details of what transpired. Employees have the right to politely end a conversation or hang up the phone when a situation becomes abusive or aggressive. If applicable, an Employee Incident Report Form should be completed.
- If a general complaint is received about a customer service experience involving a Town Employee, the complaint will not be generated in the Report a Problem software; rather the complaint will be directed to the appropriate department Supervisor for further investigation.
- Regular business hours as it relates to administrative services and expected response times included in this policy are Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30pm. Office closures in observance of statutory holidays or other staff events will be communicated in advance on multiple channels including the Town website and social media channels.

7. Responsibilities

Employee Response Times

In-Person

- Attend to walk-in clients immediately, or at the earliest opportunity.

Phone Calls

- When answering the phone, identify yourself by using your first name.
- When there is a need to redirect a call to another department, provide the individual with the employee's first name, department name, and extension before transferring.
- Respond to all voicemail messages within two (2) business days, even if simply to acknowledge receipt of the inquiry.
- Change voicemail greeting if out of office for one (1) business day or more. The message should be brief, include an alternate contact and identify the date of return. The voicemail greeting is to be changed back to the general message upon return.
- Consider forwarding calls to an alternate if out of office for more than three (3) businesses days when applicable.

Email

- When initiating an email or responding to an email from the public, use plain language and clearly communicate your message in a professional manner. Avoid using acronyms, slang, or technical terminology.



- Respond to all Email requests within two (2) business days, even if simply to acknowledge receipt of the inquiry.
- Change auto-reply message using the approved auto-reply template (see Appendix A) if out of office for more than one (1) business day.
- Add a 'Vacation Alert' email signature to all outgoing emails at least one week in advance of the vacation start date if the duration of the time off exceeds 1 (one) calendar week.

Report a Problem

- Respond to all Report a Problem service requests directly through the platform within three (3) business days, even if simply to acknowledge receipt of the inquiry.

Social Media

- Respond to direct messages within two (2) business days, even if simply to acknowledge the inquiry.

Written Correspondence

- Respond to written correspondence within five (5) business days, even if simply to acknowledge the inquiry.

If 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. Total time should not exceed fifteen (15) business days. If a formal decision of Council is required, an official response will be sent within five (5) business days of the decision.

Office of the CAO

The Office of the CAO will oversee this policy.