

APPOINTMENTS

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1. GENERAL

1.01 This section describes standards for repair appointments. It is to be used with other Bell System practices and administrative plans in conducting repair operations.

1.02 This section has been reissued to:

- (a) Specify categories of appointments to be used by customer contact personnel in the Plant Service Center in negotiating repair appointments.
- (b) Eliminate the "question form" of offering repair appointments. This change is intended to permit the Plant Service Center customer contact employee to exercise control over the negotiated appointment time.
- (c) Make reference to facilities to route customer calls to a repair center during off-hours and in certain small locations—this system is described in E.M. 514, dated August 29, 1967.
- (d) Eliminate "express regret form" for apologies made by Plant Service Center customer contact personnel.
- (e) Introduce a method for providing better repair service to customers served by a Plant

Service Center *other than* the one called—and consequently reduce work content in Plant Service Centers.

(f) Emphasize importance of negotiating only repair appointments which can be met.

(g) Remove contact handling information.

Since this is a general revision, arrows used to indicate changes have been omitted.

2. WHAT APPOINTMENTS ARE AND WHY THEY ARE NECESSARY

2.01 Appointments are arrangements made with the customer to clear a trouble by a specified time.

2.02 Appointments are made to let the customer know when a trouble will be cleared. Making and meeting appointments will:

- (a) Provide good service to customers.
- (b) Help us control work load.
- (c) Eliminate the need for customers to report their trouble again.
- (d) Reduce No Access cases.
- (e) Help use forces in an efficient and orderly manner.

3. CATEGORIES OF APPOINTMENTS

3.01 It is essential to *know* the capability of repair forces to respond to a customer trouble report. Customer contact personnel must be provided with realistic appointment intervals to satisfy all customer reports. Since local conditions and force availability vary day to day and hour to hour, these appointment times should be changed accordingly.

3.02 There are isolated emergency cases—i.e., PBX, Centrex or other major system failure—when it will be necessary to deviate from regular

clearance procedures. Appointments of "Right away," "At once," or "Immediately" are warranted in these cases and must be kept within one hour. These deviations from regular clearance procedures will involve special measures, such as, diverting repair employees from jobs on which they are working to the emergency job, renegotiating appointments to avoid misses etc. It is expected that these emergency appointments will require supervisory involvement to execute the required shifting of repair personnel.

3.03 The above isolated emergency cases are exceptions, outside the scope of regular trouble clearance procedures. Within regular trouble clearance procedures three appointment intervals should be maintained for each RSB and used by customer contact personnel in negotiating appointments with customers:

(a) **High Priority** — This is the shortest possible interval in which repair forces can restore service to normal. This commitment should be "offered" only in cases of extreme urgency or emergency.

(b) **Normal** — This is the interval in which repair forces can restore service to normal and should be "offered" except in cases of extreme urgency or emergency; where the customer requests a later time; or troubles categorized by management for negotiating longer intervals for increased force utilization (low priority).

(c) **Low Priority** — This is the interval by which repair forces can restore service to normal or can repair non-service-affecting troubles by utilizing high efficiency planning techniques, such as Bulk Loading.

3.04 These appointment intervals must be maintained up-to-the-minute through continuous monitoring of repair forces performance in responding to customer trouble reports (ie, clearing troubles). When these actual performance data change, adjustments must be made in appropriate appointment categories. In this way, commitments made to customers will always be realistic.

4. CUSTOMERS REPORTING TROUBLES DURING OFF-HOURS AND IN CERTAIN SMALL LOCATIONS

4.01 Customer trouble reports received during off-hours and in certain small locations may

be routed to a Plant Service Center over regular message (nondedicated) facilities. The call is received in the customer's serving Central Office and redirected to the repair center providing coverage at that time of day. This capability is provided through use of an automatic dialer and control circuits.

4.02 Trouble reports are not always given directly to a Plant Service Center. Reports may be taken during off-hours and, in some small locations, by Traffic operators. Where arrangements of this sort exist, whoever takes the report should give the customer the same appointment time as would have been received from the Plant Service Center. This will mean furnishing time periods and instructions for applying them. Remember—customers are Telephone Company customers regardless of who takes their report.

4.03 When the Traffic operator is responsible for handling repair calls, a customer may object to the appointment given. If the customer wants a later appointment within normal business hours, one can generally be arranged. If he wants a shorter appointment, or one outside of normal hours, the operator must consult a predesignated contact for advice. In these cases the operator should obtain, if possible, a telephone number where the customer can be reached.

5. REPORTS FROM CUSTOMERS SERVED BY ANOTHER PLANT SERVICE CENTER

5.01 A Plant Service Center may get trouble reports from customers served by another Center. An appointment should generally be given that applies in the Plant Service Center receiving the report. This eliminates the need for repair service employees knowing the appointment times in other Plant Service Centers with which they deal. Special conditions may preclude this arrangement; in this case local methods should be devised to care for them. In any case, reports of this sort must be handled with the care and promptness given those for which the receiving Plant Service Center is responsible.

5.02 The Serving Plant Service Center is in the best position to negotiate appointments for reports on services in its territory. As an alternative to the method described above, the Repair Service employee receiving the report for another Center may suggest that the customer call a number in the

Serving Center. The customer should be informed of the reason for the referral; that is to say, the best possible service can be rendered by the Center which will perform the work required to restore service. Where the customer does not accept the suggestion to call directly to his Serving Plant Service Center, the report is to be accepted and documented in accordance with the procedures for handling reports Received for Another Center (RAC).

5.03 The method described above may be used only where a special line (or group of lines) is specifically allocated in each Serving Plant Service Center for the receipt of customers referred from another Center. The quantity of lines should be adequate to ensure the customer access to his Serving Plant Service Center during busy periods, as

determined by applying standard traffic study methods to traffic usage data gathered through semi-annual study of busy period traffic. Arrangements must be made to provide customers free calling to these lines from any location.

5.04 Free calling to Repair Service may be furnished to customers via "Free Line Service"; INWATS; etc. Every effort must be made to avoid fraudulent use of facilities. The method should be selected in consultation with local Security and Traffic organizations.

5.05 Where a 7-digit number is used to provide Repair Service access, "referred" traffic may be handled on that group of lines; this can be determined only after study of lines and usage to determine adequacy of the group to handle the calls.