

OBTAINING AND ACKNOWLEDGING ORDERS

Be guided by the instructions in other sections in regard to acknowledging special orders, reports, or requests pertaining for example to telegram, Long Distance, and emergency calls, as well as reports of cut-off, wrong number, double connection, and other service difficulties.

1. Acknowledging the order. When you understand the order or request and it does not involve further immediate conversation with the customer, acknowledge it and comply with it.

This acknowledgment serves a dual purpose. It is intended to inform the customer before you leave him to carry out his request that you have received it, and it is the principal opportunity on most calls to convey to the customer an indication of the spirit in which you work. When a request for a connection involves supplementary questioning before you take action, postpone the acknowledgment until you have obtained sufficient details to proceed. When you can comply with the request immediately by supplying some information desired, no other acknowledgment is required.

When you acknowledge, try to make the phrase fit in a conversational way into the manner in which the customer gave the order, without delaying the call to decide which phrase to use. A few phrases are suggested below, but do not regard the list as complete.

"Yes, sir."
"Yes, thank you."
"All right."
"All right, sir."
"All right, thank you."
"Thank you."
"I'll try it for you."
"I'll be glad to."
"Yes, I will."
"Certainly."
"One moment, please?"
"Just a moment, please?"

Use the customer's name in any of the above phrases if you know it.

2. Order received by number. If the customer requests a number which you understand and which you have no reason to question, acknowledge it and proceed with the request. If there is reason to question, do so or make a suitable explanation along the following lines.

- a. If you are in doubt as to whether the office name given is intended for a local central office or for one at a toll point, or if you are uncertain as to which of two places with the same name is desired, ask if it is the one more frequently called, for example, "Is that Beacon in Baltimore?" or "Is that Newport, Rhode Island?"
- b. If the call is one that would be handled at the toll board, such as collect, appointment, person-to-person, credit card, conference, etc., inform the customer at the first opportunity and connect him to Long Distance as in Section 105.

OBTAINING AND ACKNOWLEDGING ORDERS—Continued

2. Continued

- c. If the office name or numeral, or name and numeral, is omitted where it is required, question the order as follows unless you have been directed to accept calls without an office name as being in the calling office. If the customer is unable to give the office name, refer him to the directory or to Information as in "e(2)."
- (1) In a large city or an area with a small proportion of calls for your own office, ask, "5678, what office, please?", "What central office, please?", or "Which Beacon office do you wish?"
 - (2) In other cases you may ask, "Is that Adams, 5678?" using your own office name, or if you recognize the number as probably being in a near-by frequently called office, you may ask, "Is that Beacon?" or "Is that Beacon 2?"
- d. If the customer abbreviates the office name, as by giving only the first two letters, or otherwise departs too widely from the accepted form so that you are not sure what he means, repeat the order in the prescribed form or question him as to the part in doubt.
- e. If the order is for a number which is obviously incorrect or for a central office name or office numeral which you do not recognize and can not find on your bulletin, give a no such number report and, if necessary, refer the customer to the directory or to Information, as in "(2)." Such cases would include the following:

Central office name or office numeral given is not used in the local or "A" board toll area.
Office numeral not given with the central office name when required.
Digits in the number are less than, or more than, required for numbers in the office called.
Party line letter given and the called office does not use letters as station designations.

- (1) In giving these reports use such phrases as those in the following list that have not been canceled in your office:

"There are no Beacon numbers in Baltimore."
"There are no numbers beginning with five in Hartford."
"There is no Beacon 5678."
"Beacon 5678 is a wrong number."
"Beacon 5678 seems to be a wrong number."
"There are several Beacon offices. Which one do you wish, please?"
"Which one of the Beacon offices do you wish?"
"There is no Beacon-7 office."
"Beacon numbers do not have letters after them."
"Is that Beacon 4-5678?" (Emphasize the office numeral in those cases where it is the only one working.)
"There are no longer any Beacon numbers."

- (2) If the customer then changes his order, proceed as on a new call. If he does not, explain again that there is no such number and suggest that he verify it, using a phrase that best suits the condition and the frame of mind of the customer, as for example, "Will you look in your directory for the number, please?" "Will you look up the number again, please?" or "Shall I give you information?" If, however, you have information records at your position, do not use the latter phrase but look up the number.

May 1, 1940.

OBTAINING AND ACKNOWLEDGING ORDERS

2. ORDER RECEIVED BY NUMBER.

(Supplementing Paragraph 2e(2) opposite)

Do not offer to connect the customer with Information unless he is irritated or indicates that he has no way of verifying the number.

If you are to establish connection to Information and the Modified Information Practice is in effect in your exchange, briefly announce to Information the customer's reason for not wanting to refer to his directory as, for example, "NO DIRECTORY," and cut out. However, where the urgency and nature of other work or the condition of the traffic demands your full attention, you may cut out of the connection without waiting for the answer of the information operator.

OBTAINING AND ACKNOWLEDGING ORDERS—Continued

3. Order received without a telephone number.

- a. If the call is for Long Distance or any operator reached through Long Distance, or if the customer makes a request which should be handled by Long Distance, acknowledge the order and proceed as in the section on Long Distance calls.
- b. If the call is by name for a telegraph company or for an official bureau such as Information or Repair Service, or if the call is an emergency call, proceed as in the sections covering these special classes of calls.
- c. If the call is by name for the fire or police department or for any other agency listed on your bulletin, accept the call by name if locally directed to do so, even though no emergency is claimed. This is particularly applicable in times of extensive disaster.
- d. In any other case, say, "What is the number, please?" or "Do you know the number?" unless you are permitted to accept calls by name.
 - (1) If the number is then given, acknowledge the order and proceed with the call.
 - (2) If the number is not then given, explain that you can not complete calls by name and refer the customer to Information or the directory as in "2e(2)."

4. Order not understood.

- a. Make further efforts to secure the number, using procedures such as those given below which have not been canceled in your office.
 - (1) Say, "What number, please?" and if you still do not understand say, "I'm sorry, I don't understand you," adding if necessary "What number, please?"
 - (2) If you understand most of the order, repeat it slowly, emphasizing the part in doubt. If you still do not understand, try to develop the detail in question by any means that seems applicable as by spelling the office name or by specifically questioning a digit, as for example, "Is the third digit four or zero?"
 - (3) If you are in doubt as to the name or the last of the number, question that part, repeating the portion you understand, as for example, "5678, what office please?", "What was the last digit?", or "Beacon 567—what is the rest of the number, please?"
- b. If you then understand the order, acknowledge it suitably and proceed with the call. If you do not, you may continue your effort to obtain the number using your judgment as to how to proceed, or you may refer the case to your supervisor, depending on the pressure of other work.

SUPERVISOR: Try to obtain the order from the calling party.

- (1) If you understand it, tell the operator to establish the connection. If difficulty in obtaining the order is apparently due to trouble on the line, try to make the calling party understand that there is trouble on his line and that you will have it cared for. Obtain the calling number if possible and report the trouble.

If you are unable to secure the number from the calling party, obtain the line number or one of the station numbers shown on the number plate if the line is in a manual office, or have the switchroom trace the connection while the operator holds the trunk in a dial office. In either case give the plant department such details of the trouble as you have.
- (2) If the order can not be understood due to the calling party's poor articulation or foreign accent, request him to ask some one else to come to the telephone. If another person comes to the telephone, try to obtain the order from him.

OBTAINING AND ACKNOWLEDGING ORDERS - Continued

3. ORDER RECEIVED WITHOUT A TELEPHONE NUMBER.

(The following supplements subparagraph 3-a opposite)

a. Calls received concerning the following services should be referred to Long Distance:

- (a) Conference Calls
- (b) Credit Card Calls
- (c) Sequence Service Calls
- (d) Transient Calls
- (e) Overseas Calls
- (f) Alaska Calls
- (g) Toll Terminal Calls. (Exchange L.D. (number).)
- (h) Ship Telephone Calls
 - (Marine Calls)
 - (Harbor Calls)
 - (Radio Station KOW)
 - (Ship to Shore Calls)
 - (Radiotelephone Calls)
 - (Dispatch Calls)

(i) *mobile service*

(The following supplements subparagraph 3-d (2), opposite)

Exception: On a local call, if the number is not then given, explain that you cannot complete calls by name and refer the customer to the directory, as in "2-e(2)." If the customer states that he has referred to the directory, states that he has no directory, indicates unwillingness to refer to the directory, or gives any reason for not being able to refer to the directory, refer him to Information, as in "2-e(2)."

If you establish connection to Information and the Modified Information Practice is in effect in your exchange, briefly announce to Information the customer's reason for being unable to refer to the directory as, for example, "No directory," and cut out. However, where the urgency and nature of other work or the condition of the traffic demands your full attention, you may cut out of the connection without waiting for the answer of the information operator.

OBTAINING AND ACKNOWLEDGING ORDERS—Continued

5. **Simultaneous calls on a line.** When answering a line or trunk signal, if you find that two parties are calling simultaneously proceed as follows.

a. **Manual Line.** Repeat the order which you first understand and then say, "**Will the other party call a little later, please?**"

If the other party insists upon having his call accepted immediately, explain that one party must hang up before you can complete a call for either. When one party agrees to hang up, proceed with the call.

b. **Dial Trunk.** Proceed as for a double connection in Section 14, unless it is evident that both parties are on the same party line, in which case proceed as in "a."