

SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE OPERATING PRACTICE

1. **SECRECY OF COMMUNICATIONS.** (This cancels Paragraph 1 opposite, which should be ruled out with ink)

All previous notices and instructions pertaining to Secrecy of Communications are superseded by "Note Regarding Secrecy of Communications" dated July 25, 1940, a copy of which is filed immediately following the title page of this practice.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE OPERATING PRACTICE

This section covers certain important principles which safeguard telephone service and permit broadening the scope of normal action to meet unusual circumstances.

1. **SECRECY OF TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATIONS.** An essential part of telephone service is privacy and you must never give any customer reason to believe that conversations or the nature of any message will become known to any one else through any fault of the Telephone Company or its employees. When a telephone connection has been established and conversation starts, the connection is for the exclusive use of the customers involved.

When at the switchboard you necessarily hear parts of conversations when you monitor as required by Practice but you must never monitor messages unnecessarily or longer than is required. You must never reveal outside the office any conversation so heard or the nature of any message nor discuss it within the office. In addition to never repeating any part of a conversation or the nature of any message, regard the fact that there has been a call from one telephone to another as confidential except as it may be necessary to discuss a call in the regular course of the telephone business.

You must never (a) use any information derived from a message which you have handled, or have acquired in any other manner as an employee of the Company; (b) permit any unauthorized person to listen to any telephone conversation; (c) discuss communication arrangements made between the Company and its customers except as required for the proper handling thereof; (d) give an unauthorized person any information regarding the location of equipment, trunks, cables, circuits, etc., or regarding ticket records of calls, etc.

Your attention is called to the fact that the law makes it an offense, punishable by a fine or imprisonment, or both, to violate the secrecy of telephonic communications.

2. The parties in communication generally have the right to unlimited use of the facilities involved. In cases of damage to, or shortage of, facilities, however, conversation may be limited to meet the needs of the situation. Also, an existing conversation is interrupted to secure sanction to use the facilities involved for an emergency call, and similar treatment is permissible when in the judgment of the supervisor the situation is sufficiently urgent.

3. Emergency calls take precedence over all other calls and involve all reasonable and practicable steps to complete them as soon as possible. Regular procedures are used on such calls in so far as they expedite action but special steps are taken to eliminate normal procedures which might delay the connection, and each call is given personal and individual attention until it is disposed of.

4. Complying with unusual requests or taking unusual action on occasional calls is contemplated when the action appears to be the reasonable thing to do in the particular situation and is the treatment which would be desirable under similar

circumstances. In judging the reasonableness of a course of action, consideration must be given to factors such as equipment limitations; the company's responsibility to other customers who may be involved, and legal requirements. In many cases initiative will provide alternative measures that are satisfactory to the customer and accomplish his ultimate purpose as well as his original request. This liberty of action based on initiative and judgment assumes that, when the propriety of the action that was taken is at all doubtful, it will be referred through the proper channels for review.

5. Any indication of service difficulty immediately receives adequate attention. Whenever it becomes apparent that a customer has encountered a service difficulty, it is contemplated that the call be given prompt and individual attention until the situation has been adequately met. It is expected that this will involve the use of judgment in appraising the situation and determining the action to be taken, as well as alertness in sensing a case where assistance would be warranted. Thus when the customer reports some delay under unusual circumstances, the operator may feel free to volunteer appropriate action, or when a call has been misrouted, the operator may under the circumstances feel justified in handling it although in general the practice is to refer such calls to the proper operator.

6. Anything that affects the timing or the charging of a call should receive the utmost care and attention, and whenever an error is discovered it should be corrected to prevent the call being billed to a wrong subscriber and to ensure that only the correct amount is charged, especially when an overcharge is involved.

7. Most operating situations should be handled by the operator in so far as she can do so satisfactorily and other work permits. Considerable latitude should be permitted experienced operators in performing certain functions normally referred to supervisors where such action is practical, and calls referred to the supervisor as a regular routine should be kept at a minimum consistent with the experience of the force and proper service requirements.