

"A" OPERATORS

SERVICE CRITICISMS

1. CALLING OR CALLED PARTY MAKES A COMPLAINT OR COMMENTS UNFAVORABLY UPON THE SERVICE.  
(Canceling and replacing Paragraph 1c which should be ruled out in ink).
  - c. If the calling party asks for the chief operator, the manager, or someone in authority, proceed as provided for this condition, under, "Calls for Official Lines."

## SERVICE CRITICISMS

### 1. Calling or called party makes a complaint or comments unfavorably upon the service.

a. Where either the calling or called party makes a complaint, comments regarding service, or experiences difficulty with a call but does not ask to be connected with any one in authority, proceed in accordance with one of the following methods, exercising your best judgment as to the method to be followed.

(1) If he criticizes the service, makes a specific complaint, or expresses serious dissatisfaction, offer to connect him with your supervisor, saying, "Will you speak to my supervisor, please? I will connect you."

(a) If he offers no objection, connect him with your supervisor.

(b) If he objects to being connected, hangs up, or desires to proceed with his call, do not connect him with your supervisor.

(2) If he comments regarding the service without expressing any particular annoyance or if you expect to give satisfaction by the completion of a call under way, do not offer to establish connection with your supervisor. If, however, you have any doubt as to whether or not you should proceed with the call, say, "Shall I give you my supervisor?" and be governed by the reply received.

(3) If the case is one where assistance is required in connection with the completion of a call and should, as provided for a specific condition in another section, be referred to your supervisor or if it is one where he asks to have a report verified, refer him to your supervisor.

b. If you observe that a subscriber has encountered unusual delay or difficulty in the completion of a call or in obtaining a report, you should not only take action voluntarily to obtain the connection desired, but also inform your supervisor if there is any possibility that the incident may warrant treatment beyond what you can undertake. For instance, if the calling party abandons his call after apparently experiencing unsatisfactory service, notify your supervisor.

If it appears from a subscriber's incidental remarks or from your own knowledge of conditions, that a subscriber has received unsatisfactory service and he has not specifically complained, you should refer the condition to your supervisor.

c. If the calling party asks for the chief operator, the manager, or someone in authority, connect him with your supervisor unless the call is by name, in which case establish connection with the desired line.

d. If the called party asks for the chief operator, the manager, or someone in authority, refer the call to your supervisor. (Sr. <sup>11</sup>/<sub>12</sub>)

e. If the calling party complains that you have been slow in answering his line signal, proceed as follows.

(1) If you know that the signal just appeared, say, "I have just received your signal. Do you want a number now, please?" (Add: you give your number pls.)

(2) In any other case, say, "I am sorry you were kept waiting."

f. If the complaint or comment is apparently made because of a delay due to a fire drill being held, say, "We have just had a fire drill. Will you excuse the delay, please?"

### 2. Flashing signal received from the supervisor or chief operator.

a. If you receive a flashing supervisory signal, split connection if the supervisor or chief operator instructs you to do so, in order that the instructions given you may not be overheard by the party connected.

b. Proceed in accordance with the instructions received from the supervisor or chief operator.

(1) If the supervisor or chief operator asks to be connected with a number, hold the line to the

**SERVICE CRITICISMS—Continued**

supervisor or chief operator on a back cord and reach the desired number with the front cord of the same pair, holding the original calling subscriber on another cord. If the supervisor or chief operator later flashes and instructs you to connect the calling party with the called number, disconnect the back cord from the line to the supervisor or chief operator and substitute it for the cord on which you are holding the original calling party.

- (2) If you are instructed to connect the calling party with a line or trunk, disregarding the busy test, establish connection with the line or trunk without testing.

**3. Commendations.**

- a. If a subscriber comments favorably regarding the service on a particular connection or regarding the service in general, acknowledge the comment by saying, "**Thank you. You are welcome,**" or some such appropriate phrase. Connect him with your supervisor only when he so requests. Give the supervisor the details of the comment unless it is evident that the comment was simply a casual remark.

*Diseno*  
**SERVICE CRITICISMS**

**1. General.**

The occasion of a criticism should be used as an opportunity to create a favorable impression of the company, its methods, and its personnel. The following factors are especially important in giving this impression.

- a. A courteous acknowledgment of the criticism, when received.
- b. A speedy and satisfactory investigation of the feature criticized.
- c. Application of practical measures to correct any defect and to give an explanation of the facts of the case which will be satisfactory to the subscriber. In this connection it is especially important that a prompt report be given to the subscriber if he calls a company representative and the case can not be definitely and satisfactorily handled while he remains at the telephone.
- d. Precaution that all reports rendered to the subscriber are accurate.

**2. Personalizing the service.**

You should use comments on the service or incidental remarks made to you by subscribers as well as your own knowledge of unsatisfactory service, as opportunities for personalizing the service, thus removing any cause for formal criticism and winning the confidence of subscribers. For example, if an operator refers a case to you where a subscriber has abandoned his call after apparently experiencing unsatisfactory service, you should call back the station calling and offer to take such further action as may be required to straighten out the case. It is generally desirable for you to approach the subscriber by stating that his operator has told you that some one from that station failed to obtain satisfactory connection and that you would like to be of help in obtaining the connection desired.

You should address the subscriber by name if you know it.

**3. Value of criticisms.**

Those receiving or handling criticisms should hold the point of view and accept the fact that criticisms are justified from the subscriber's point of view. As a general principle, the subscriber who expresses dissatisfaction with the service has received or is receiving poor service, and in either case the criticism enables us to check the cause of the trouble and to take steps to prevent its recurrence in so far as it is possible, and thereby place the service on a satisfactory basis. In certain instances criticisms arise as the result of subscribers neither understanding nor appreciating the conditions under which telephone service is given and they are, therefore, unable to make proper allowance for occasional and unavoidable errors. In such instances, by receiving the subscriber's expression of opinion, you are able to give him an insight into the telephone work. ~~In some cases, getting the subscriber to visit the central office is very effective in giving him an insight into the conditions under which service is rendered. This invitation can frequently be so associated with the difficulty as to secure the maximum amount of interest from the subscriber. When visitors are entertained at the central office, special effort should be made to explain and illustrate specifically the points which are most annoying to him.~~

**4. Handling of criticisms and commendations.**

You should become familiar with the general practices outlined in the following paragraphs and should follow them in handling all service criticisms.

**5. Receiving and recording criticisms and commendations.**

Answer calls in general as provided under "General Practices."

## SERVICE CRITICISMS—Continued

**Note:** At offices where it is desired to encourage subscribers to ask for the supervisor when making service complaints or comments, the supervisor may be locally authorized to say, "This is the supervisor, Miss Jones. I am acting for the chief operator. May I help you?" when answering a call on which the operator tells her that the subscriber asked for the chief operator.

The subscriber's statements should be courteously received and the assurance expressed that the feature will be given immediate attention.

Prepare a record whenever the subscriber makes any adverse comment regarding the service or whenever he reports some condition that requires further action. A record need not be written on a request to verify a don't answer, busy, or other report when the situation is entirely cleared up by disposing of the call under way at the time, unless the subscriber also makes some adverse comment regarding the service.

Also prepare a record of each commendation unless it is evident that the comment was simply a casual remark.

In noting the comments, you should attempt to record his actual words rather than a general statement that he was pleased or dissatisfied with the adjustment of his difficulty.

### 6. Conversing with subscribers.

A principle of primary importance is to allow the subscriber to give his comments without interruption. After he has stated his case, freedom of discussion is expected because the receipt of a criticism differs materially from handling routine traffic for which phraseology is prescribed to meet anticipated conditions. The manner of dealing with each case must be determined largely by the subscriber's attitude at the time, his ability to understand telephone conditions, and his temperament.

The most effective way of handling a subscriber is to talk with him in a natural tone of voice as if conversing face to face. He is more favorably impressed with the supervisor who talks in an efficient business-like way than if a subservient attitude is used, which is apt to give him the impression that he is dealing with someone who has neither the ability nor the authority to handle the case satisfactorily.

Addressing a subscriber by name, if the name is known, when opening or closing the discussion, gives individuality to the conversation, but continually repeating the name during the discussion should be avoided. The terms "Sir" and "Ma'am" should not be used repeatedly because frequent use of these terms is apt to reflect a patronizing attitude. Common usage allows freer use of the expressions "Yes, sir" and "No, sir," than "Yes, Ma'am" in ordinary conversation. Even the terms "Yes" and "No" are courteous, especially if joined to qualifying statements and when so used they add to the personal and informal tone of the conversation.

You should acquire the habit of using expressions that reflect both a good choice of words and describe technical aspects of telephone operation in non-technical language. The use of stock phrases should be avoided, such as "I will take it up" or "I see." Such phrases frequently repeated create the impression with the subscriber that his criticism will receive perfunctory treatment only. Telephone terms, while of common use within the telephone business, generally have no significance when used in conversing with a subscriber. Therefore, in place of using such terms it is preferable to use descriptive phrases. For example, instead of the term "answering jack" the statement "Where your line comes into the central office" is more descriptive from a subscriber's point of view. Similarly, for the term "multiple jack," "Where connection is made to your line"; for "A" operator, "The operator who answers when you make a call"; and for the "B" operator, "The operator who puts up the connection in another office," are illustrations of this principle.

If the subscriber's difficulty is the result of a possible equipment failure, as when a subscriber states that he is certain that there is someone at the called station and that he received a don't answer report, be sure to report the case to repair service.

If the subscriber's difficulty is the result of an error, the error should be frankly admitted. If there is circumstantial evidence that an error has been made but there is no conclusive evidence of it, admitting that

## SERVICE CRITICISMS—Continued

a mistake may have been made is the desirable way of commenting on the case. Occasionally a subscriber may claim that an error has been made in spite of the fact that there is unquestionable evidence to the contrary, and if comment on such cases can not be avoided, explanation should be made as to why there appears to be no grounds for the error, rather than taking a decided stand that no error has occurred. In many cases it is desirable to accept the criticism with a promise to investigate and report rather than endeavor to give a full explanation when the subscriber is not in a receptive mood. Incidentally a statement of an operator that she did not make an error in handling a particular call should not be considered to be conclusive evidence unless otherwise substantiated.

In the case of a commendation, appreciation should be expressed of the subscriber's kindness in taking the trouble to make known his satisfaction and he should be assured that the employee, or groups of employees, directly concerned will be notified and that they will be greatly pleased to know their efforts to serve have been successful.

### 7. Dealing with special types of subscribers.

At times a subscriber, angered by real or supposed faulty service, becomes abusive and under such circumstances a company representative must be on guard against being drawn into a personal argument. A company representative must bear in mind that any remarks which a subscriber may make under such circumstances are directed toward the telephone company and consequently no statements should be considered personal. On the other hand, the company will protect its women employees against profane and indecent language and if such is used it is expected that the subscriber will be referred at once to a male representative.

Frequently a subscriber is encountered whose dissatisfaction with the service seems to be chronic, but in such cases it must be remembered that no matter how often he may complain, he should always be treated as if some real irregularity in the service exists. Both abusive subscribers and those whose dissatisfaction with the service appears to be chronic, frequently lack understanding of the practices and arrangements necessary for giving service and the desire of the operating forces to maintain a high grade of service. Consequently patience and skill in dealing with such subscribers so as to make them familiar with these facts are most important in changing their point of view. It is especially important to bear in mind that occasionally a subscriber will be very critical of the telephone service and yet may display great tolerance in other affairs, both business and social, and that the opinion of such a person is very apt to carry great weight in giving his associates the impression that the telephone service is extremely poor.

### 8. Subscriber objects to rules.

Subscribers may occasionally object to certain of the rules by which the company conducts its business and there may be a temptation to make exception to please the subscriber who takes this attitude. In cases of this nature, however, care should be taken to explain the reason for the practice in question in order to show that the practice is reasonable and is followed on that account and not because it is a rule.

### 9. Communicating with subscribers.

In caring for a traffic criticism, communicate by telephone with subscribers who have experienced dissatisfaction with the service, in order to secure any further details that may be deemed necessary. Calling a subscriber under these circumstances has the beneficial effect of giving assurance that the criticism is receiving attention.

If it is desirable to have the line tested for possible trouble, inform the plant forces as to why the test is requested, for a favorable impression will be created if the plant man making the test incidentally states that he is especially investigating possible defects which might cause the difficulties which the subscriber has been having.

## SERVICE CRITICISMS—Continued

### 10. Informing the operating forces concerning criticisms and commendations.

Allowing the operators to know that service reactions of a certain nature are being experienced in individual cases, often leads to finding and eliminating the source of dissatisfaction. The desire to give satisfactory service is a characteristic of the operating force that can be capitalized in disposing of criticisms satisfactorily. It is frequently difficult to determine by an investigation the exact source of service troubles, but if the forces have been informed that a particular subscriber has criticized a definite feature of the service, they are in a position to notice and call attention to important aspects of the case that might not otherwise be noticed, especially when the service reaction is of an intermittent nature. Moreover, knowledge that a subscriber has had trouble with his service, frequently gives the operating forces the opportunity to display familiarity with the individual's service when they have occasion to straighten out reactions which occur. Displaying knowledge of a particular subscriber's service in this way is a factor that tends to give him assurance that his criticism is receiving attention.

In no case should attempts be made to give an individual subscriber special service. An essential objective in traffic operation is to give all subscribers a high grade of service. Consequently if an individual is not receiving service consistent with this objective, it is necessary to determine the reasons in order that his service will be as satisfactory as that given to others.

Criticisms should not be used for censuring members of the operating forces. Instances are rare where there is justification for reprimanding an operator for voluntarily causing poor service. If, however, such an occasion arises, the case should be handled by the chief operator personally.

### 11. Final disposition of criticisms and commendations.

As a general principle, a criticism should not be disposed of until the subscriber is satisfied that action has been taken to make his service satisfactory. While he generally does not wish to be continually annoyed by inquiries as to whether his service is satisfactory, nevertheless calling him after an effort has been made to find and eliminate the source of previous dissatisfaction should be followed as a general procedure before criticisms are filed. In deciding whether a subscriber is satisfied that his criticism has been given proper attention, the attitude of the subscriber should be given greater weight than the literal meaning of his statements. There are certain subscribers who will not definitely state that they are entirely satisfied with the telephone service, yet when one is familiar with the temperament of certain subscribers, even a favorable attitude reflects a condition that they are well satisfied with the attention which has been given to their criticism and with the service.

In instances where criticism has been made in connection with asking for assistance in straightening out the call which has gone wrong and the subscriber has taken that occasion for condemning the service in general, calling him back in a few days and inquiring if he has continued to experience difficulty with his service has a tendency to promote good public relations. If under such circumstances he expresses the attitude that he has had no further difficulty with his service, the previous criticism should be considered to be definitely disposed of.

### 12. Called party requests connection with chief operator, manager, or someone in authority.

["A" operators—1d]

- a. If the subscriber criticizes his service, try to adjust the matter satisfactorily.
- b. If it develops that the call is an official call and not a service criticism, explain that the operator whom he reached is not his operator and request him to hang up for a moment and then make his call again. If he appears dissatisfied or it seems inadvisable to ask him to hang up and call again, obtain his name and number and advise him that you will ask the desired employee to call him as soon as possible.