

## WATCHING FOR SIGNALS

1. **General.** Each appearance of a line or trunk or supervisory signal means that some action is called for. As discussed elsewhere, the supervisory signals should be given preference because when anything more than simple disconnect is required, only you can give that attention, whereas another operator can answer a line or trunk signal, if necessary.

2. **While waiting for a signal to appear.** Keep your eyes focused a little above the supervisory signals on your keyshelf. This enables you to see changes in supervisory signals at the same time that you are aware, by the lighting of a line pilot, that a new call is awaiting answer in the panel indicated.

A number of operations, such as sighting and plugging into a jack and writing a ticket, prevent you from keeping your eyes on the cord supervisory signals constantly. Needless to say, you will always glance back as quickly as possible after each such operation, but it may be helpful to have a list of those times when you should look back at the supervisory signals. Practice carefully looking back at the supervisory signals at these times. Such a list follows:

- a. While waiting for a new line or trunk signal, when connections are in progress on your position.
- b. While answering orally after plugging into a line or trunk signal.
- c. While waiting for a distant operator to answer after plugging into an outgoing trunk.
- d. After sighting and plugging into a line or trunk jack.
- e. After dialing or setting up a number.
- f. After completing a ticket entry necessarily made then, such as recording details and start and finish of conversation, and at frequent intervals when filling out reports and other entries on tickets that are not required at the moment.
- g. After looking up, more readily to clear a cord congestion.

3. **Anticipating supervisory signals.**

a. Lighted front supervisory signals on the connections most recently established usually are indications that the stations have not answered yet. Answer can be expected in a few seconds, so if conversation must be timed, be prepared to note and enter the time of any station answer quickly. On the other hand as time passes and there is no signal change, the probability of answer decreases and you will need to prepare yourself for a flash or a disconnect abandoning the call.

Other critical periods to be prepared for are: (1) just a few seconds after you advanced the order, the steady supervisory signal may change to a busy or a reorder flash, and (2) about twenty to twenty-five seconds after advancement, a flash may appear as a result of the call being intercepted.

- b. A flash appearing shortly after you have observed the station answer probably indicates some service difficulty or an intercepted call.
- c. On an "A" position, after both signals have been out for a reasonable interval a lighted signal will call for disconnecting as promptly as possible. A disconnect signal may also mean timing, and a flash will mean a service difficulty or a new order.

### WATCHING FOR SIGNALS—Continued

#### 3. Continued

- d. On "B" positions, you can expect a disconnect signal shortly after you connect a trunk to a busy back or reorder jack, and if loop back is used you can expect a recall from the intercepting operator a short while after you connect a trunk to Intercepting.
- e. When it is necessary to look up from the keyshelf it will be helpful to have in mind not only anticipations such as those above but also the general rules governing the order of answering different kinds of signals, so that instead of being forced to hesitate to grasp a situation that confronts you, you will be able to proceed immediately to the first signal to be answered, and to dispose of it with as much dispatch as the condition permits. For example, you may think in an instant while selecting a trunk to advance a call, "That toll call probably will have answered so I'd better look at the clock right away, then while I'm passing this order I can disconnect on that long conversation if they are through."
- f. This anticipation of the appearance of supervisory signals not only sharpens your judgment so that you can make decisions more quickly, but specifically prepares you for prompt action when several signals appear simultaneously. You will remember more quickly which connections involve timing, which are slow answer conditions, etc., so that you can handle them to the best advantage.
- g. When you observe the appearance of a signal requiring a challenge at a time when you can not respond immediately, it may be helpful to hold the listening key of that cord pair until you are free to answer it.

#### 4. Watching for line or trunk signals. These may occur at any time and must be answered as promptly as supervisory signals on your position will allow.

- a. If line pilot signals are provided, you can learn to tell when a line signal is waiting even though writing at the time. When you are aware that a line pilot is lighted, start movement with a cord toward the panel at once if you are free, looking as you go, to sight the specific location of the line signal. If you can not answer immediately but are free to glance up to sight the signal, do so, making a mental note of its location, so that when you are free, you will be able to answer more nearly in order of appearance. If one hand is free but you will be unable to answer for a few seconds, and several signals are waiting, place your index finger under, or pointing toward, the signal to be answered next.
- b. If line pilot signals are not provided, it will be necessary for you to divide your attention between keyshelf and multiple, frequently glancing up at the multiple within your reach, and then at the supervisory signals. If you practice keeping your glance low enough just barely to catch the topmost strip of signals, you will develop an ability to be conscious of signals wherever they appear.  
Where subscriber multiple with lamps is high, this watching for signals becomes a challenge to you to develop skill in becoming aware of both supervisory and line signals as soon as they appear.