

PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT

VOLUME 1 – Operation Manual

CUSTOMER RELATIONS PROGRAM

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MISSION

The Phoenix Fire Department is committed to providing superior levels of quality service that exceed the public's expectations for timely and effective delivery of fire prevention, fire control, emergency medical treatment, transportation and public education.

Quality will be evaluated on how well we maintain excellence in customer satisfaction, meeting the needs of our people, achieving organization goals, and creating a service culture that continuously reinforces and promotes excellence in all line and support functions.

Being a professional on the Phoenix Fire Department means doing the "whole job". Doing the "whole job" includes focusing on the extra interpersonal dimensions and sensitivities of empathy, concern, care and compassion. Our work often involves respecting peoples' property during their most vulnerable moments, when they need help the most and have to rely on our members. We have become the "Agency of Last Resort" for the poor, the homeless, the destitute, the mentally, emotionally and physically challenged, the chronically ill, the indigent, the incarcerated, and the immigrant. Interpersonal awareness and sensitivity is our responsibility. Indifference or lack of empathy is a professional weakness. The public does not need one of our members to be having a "bad day" when they call us for help... they're already having one of their own.

POLICY

The primary customer relations policy goal of the Phoenix Fire Department is to meet or exceed our customers' (the public's) expectation of satisfaction in every contact that exists between our customers and any of our service people and/or delivery systems.

It is the policy of the Phoenix Fire Department and the responsibility of every member in the organization to:

- Provide Customer Service excellence;
- Ensure that technical and interpersonal aspects ("the whole job") are performed at superior levels;
- Provide the same high quality care and service for everyone, regardless of their circumstances;
- Provide each member the opportunity to demonstrate excellence and superior service in all contact with the public (on or off duty);
- Support and reinforce excellent Customer Service delivery by other members

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All members are to hold every interaction with the public as the "moment of truth". Each "moment of truth" is an opportunity to influence the public's perception of service received, and thus, the image of the Department.

It is imperative that members of the Department make decisions with the customer in mind. Customer Relations is about the way you look, the way you act, what you do or don't do, what you say, how you say it, and what you don't say.

Each member must continually try to enhance the value of his/her service in the customer's eyes.

Employees who rarely, if ever, come into contact with the public, must see themselves as supplying an important service for those who do. They must be prepared to continue positive service through telephone etiquette and general demeanor. We never know when a citizen is observing our actions.

INTERNAL RELATIONS

A critical component of an effective customer relations program is internal relations. To a large extent, the way customers are treated is reflective of the way members treat one another within the organization. This does not simply refer to supervisors/subordinate relationships, but also to peer, inter-department, inter-agency and line/staff relationships. In most cases, the customer of a staff division are the other operating divisions within the organization.

The following characteristics are to be practiced by all members and are essential to positive and effective internal relations:

Considerations:

Be considerate of the moral, ethical and religious values of others. Empathize with others and avoid excessive teasing and rumors.

Discretion:

Be discrete and refrain from racial, ethnic, religious, sexist, or personal comments or actions that are derogatory.

Acceptance of Others:

Be accepting of other members whose opinions and principles differ from your own. There is nothing wrong with being white, black, Irish, female, Catholic, etc. These are differences, which make us stronger as an organization... if we accentuate the positive and accept the differences.

Unity:

Place a high importance on unity in the organization and individual contributions to the work group. It is essential that we pull together in routine and stressful times and support each other.

MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisory responsibility in our quality service effort revolves around managing and leading each work unit so that it creates a predictable positive experience for the customer. This requires positive leadership on the part of the supervisor, good management and teamwork by the work group.

The supervisor/manager/leader essentially is the translator of the overall commitment to service excellence. He/she must ensure that both technical and interpersonal aspects are addressed. The supervisor must monitor, evaluate, give feedback and provide correction on technical aspects, quality of service and interpersonal skills.

Performance standards must be in place to inspire exceptional performance rather than to accept standard performance.

The supervisor sets the standards of consistent excellence/service by example.

CUSTOMER RELATIONS PROGRAM

The Phoenix Fire Department Customer Relations program represents a total organizational commitment to achieve a recognizable standard of consistent excellent service. This commitment to excellence causes us to examine and reassesses how well we manage our relationships with two key groups: Internal Customers (our own members) and external customers (our citizens/public). Both are essential, the two are inseparable.

Goals of the Customer Relations Program are to:

- Develop and implement the support system needed to teach, supervise and reinforce professional behavior standards;
- Train managers, supervisors and employees to maintain, reinforce and extend desired behaviors.

Quality and service are interdependent. It is impossible to describe quality adequately without considering it from a customer's point of view. Quality excellence between Fire Department personnel and the public will require an effective, ongoing, service-oriented training program that has a "customer focus". Members need to understand that they will be held accountable for positive customer relations and must be well aware of how the quality of these relations will be measured. Good customer service is not just an attitude. It is a set of trainable skills.

The customer relations training program is designed to:

- Empower each employee with the skills necessary to achieve positive customer relations in the face of very difficult situations;
- Provide company officers with interpersonal and scene management skills necessary to deal with atypical or adverse situations, extraordinary circumstances and unpleasant conditions;
- Reduce each member's stress by providing the competencies necessary to operate from a professional rather than an emotional base;

- Provide Department members with interpersonal skills, necessary knowledge to provide an excellent standard of care.
- Reduce the medical/legal liability by improving the professional human relations skills of members who provide emergency medical care.