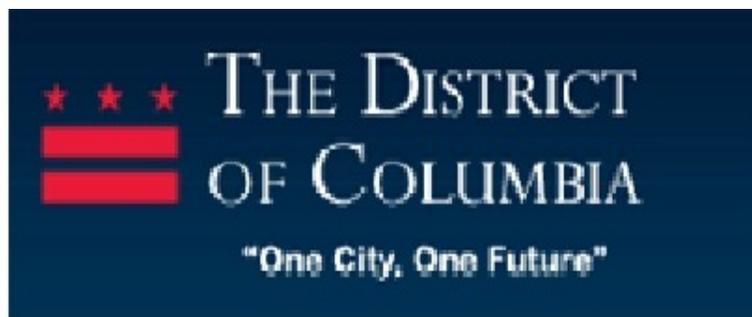


Government of the District of Columbia Taxicab Commission

**New Driver Application Training:
“Customer Service Excellence”
Participants Guide**



2013

Customer Service Participants Guide Workbook

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Customer Service Participants Guide Workbook

Introduction:

As part of the DC Taxicab Commission's New Driver Training program this Customer Service Guide is designed to provide a guide to basic customer service techniques as stated by Title 31. In this guide you will learn the basic definition and expectation of the DC Taxicab Commission as it pertains to customer service.

The Customer Service training is a 3 hour course where you will learn;

- Defining Customer Service
- Conducting Customer Service Excellence Self-Assessment
- Defining Customer Service Excellence In Accordance to Title 31
- Addressing Proper Greetings to Customers
- Reviewing Title 31 Standards for Customer Service
 - Customer Receipts for Service
 - Group Riding/Shared Riding
 - Directional Signs
 - Dress Code of Operator
 - Cleanliness of Cab

- Identifying Common Customer Service Mistakes
- Reviewing Effective Ways of Dealing with Disgruntled Customers (separate document to follow)
- Defining Internal versus External Customer or Clients
- Discussing Effective Communication Styles Related to Customer Service
- Developing Customer Service Excellence Plan

Assessment Technique:

1. Concluding each module there will be a 20 - 25 question evaluation assessing the student's comprehension and retention of the curriculum. This assessment will be graded on a percentage basis.

2. Passing this course will require a student to score between 100% - 70%. Scoring 69% and below will be considered failing, and the student will have to re-take the specified course.

3. Assessments for courses will be tracked accordingly, and tallied as a precursor to student's ability to proceed in taking the taxi driver licensing exam.

(*Note:* Penalties and/or actions for course failure will be further discussed and identified with client.)

Certificates:

Certificates, as printed by the DCTC, will be presented to students upon completion of each course.

**Defining Customer
Service Excellence**

Defining Customer Service Excellence

How do you define Customer Service Excellence? The answer to this question can mean different things to different people, to both the provider and the receiver of that service. Is there a common denominator? What defines customer service excellence for you?

Good customer service is all about bringing customers back. In the public vehicle for hire industry, it is not always possible to have repeat customers, but you certainly want happy customers, as this affects your bottom line, and your ability to make a living in your chosen field.

Those of you in the sedan or limousine industry certainly want repeat customer. You want people to pass positive feedback about your business along to others, who may then try your service for themselves, and in turn become repeat customers!

The ESSENCE of good customer service is forming a relationship with customers – a relationship that individual customers feel they would like to pursue.

How do you go about forming such a relationship? By remembering one true secret of good customer service and acting accordingly; “You will be judged by what you do, more than what you say.” Providing customer service excellence is a simple thing. To ensure consistent good customer service, all you have to do is use the following principles as your guiding basis of operation:

- Be Available – be where the customers are
- Provide the expected service – go beyond expectations when possible
- Listen to your customer’s needs - and actually provide support as you are able to
- Deal with complaints – don’t argue with customers. Seemingly small matters can balloon into larger problems for you, the service provider.
- Be helpful – even if there is no profit in it.
- Train yourself or your staff to always be helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable
- Take the extra step – whatever it may encompass. Often people may not say anything to you, but they notice and will pass it on to others
- Throw in something extra – it can be as simple as a breath mint or a tip on a great place to eat or a popular entertainment venue

Customer Service Self-Assessment

Customer Service Self-Assessment

- How many compliments are you getting on a daily basis from customers and co-workers?
- How many complaints are you getting on a daily basis from customers and co-workers?
- Are you getting the proper tips?
- Do you frequently argue with the customers or co-workers?
- Are you or your boss, if applicable, happy with your work?
- Are you on time regularly?
- Are you offended if the customer is rude?
- Are you offended if the boss tells you to do something?
- Do you listen to the customer and try to resolve their issue?
- Do you simply just listen to the customer with no reaction?
- Do you point out landmarks and points of interest to tourists?
- Do you offer to help customer's packages or luggage?
- Do you help customers with directions?
- Can you recommend nice, fine dining restaurants?
- Can you read the customer and make recommendations for a restaurant?
- Can you recommend a nice entertainment venue?
- Do you carry a tourist map?
- Is your cab clean?
- Are you clean?
- Do you wear a lot of cologne, aftershaves, or perfumes?
- Do you carry breath mints?
- Do you eat in the cab?

**Defining Customer Service Excellence in
Accordance with Title 31**

Defining Customer Service Excellence in Accordance with Title 31

Title 31 breaks down Customer Service Excellence in a few ways. The most important factors can be put into the two categories listed below:

Public Relations Skills (social customs and courtesies)

Public Relations is the practice of managing the flow of information between an individual or an organization and the public. It is a way for companies, organizations or people to enhance their reputations by cooperative efforts with other people and organizations to create good will within the community.

Social customs or standards of behavior vary across nations and cultures. A good citizen is one who follows social customs, is loyal to national ideals, and has a sense of social responsibility. The cumulative effect of our life experiences creates in each of us a lens through which we observe what goes on around us.

You might be wondering what all this has to do with you as a public vehicle for hire service provider. As such, you play an integral role in the perceptions of the city, not only by its residents but its visitors alike. Regardless of whether you are a native Washingtonian, naturalized citizen or immigrant, your perceptions of local customs and your own native behaviors will impact how you view those you come into contact with, and ultimately, how you treat them. As a public vehicle for hire service provider, you must be careful not to judge others. You cannot expect them to share your own social customs and views.

Customer Relations and Professionalism

Customer Relations is the process by which a business promotes customer satisfaction and, moreover, loyalty. At its most basic level it involves managing communications with customers, particularly customer questions and complaints and resolving disputes amicably.

The emphasis on loyalty is mostly driven by your bottom line. After all, you are in this business to make a living. Keeping existing customers is cheaper than finding new ones. Repeat customers are more likely to recommend the company to others. For most taxi drivers repeat customers may not be possible, but the mindset is still important.

**Addressing Customers with
Proper Greetings**

Addressing Customers with Proper Greetings

What is the proper way to greet someone in a business relationship? The answer to this question can vary. As a public vehicle for hire service provider you want to remain professional, yet friendly. A greeting is an act of communication and can be expressed both audibly and physically. People basically just want to be acknowledged and treated with respect. A few key things to keep in mind:

- Make eye contact with the customer
- Smile
- Avoid rudeness
- Don't be too familiar, either endearing or derogatory
- Don't be too talkative
- Civility is contagious

First impressions can be everlasting. Make a good one!

Customer Receipts for Service

Customer Receipts for Service

At the end of each taxicab ride, the taxicab driver will give a printed, meter-generated receipt that provides the following information:

- Operator's name
- Identification card number
- Vehicle tag number
- Time and date
- Amount of the fare
- Commission's complaint phone number

The driver will provide a written invoice describing the article(s) to be transported.

The driver should keep a duplicate receipt for up to one year.

The driver should not give a customer a non-meter generated receipt; however, if the meter malfunctions during the process of printing the receipt, then the operator may give that customer a non-meter generated receipt at the customer's request.

The non-meter generated receipt must include:

- Operator's name
- Identification card number
- Vehicle tag number
- Time and date
- Amount of the fare
- Commission's complaint phone number
- Signed, legibly, by the driver

Non-meter generated receipts will not relieve the operator of complying with the requirement that meters must be operational and have paper and ink at all times. The operator must immediately proceed to an authorized meter repair shop and have the meter repaired.

**Reviewing Title 31 Standards
For
Customer Service**

Customer Service Participants Guide Workbook

Group Riding / Shared Riding

Group riding for pre-formed groups is permitted at all times. No driver shall refuse to engage in group riding at any time.

Shared riding is only permitted at Union Station, Verizon Center, and Nationals Park at such times as are determined to be necessary to achieve adequate service by a Starter employed or authorized by Union Station, Verizon Center, or Nationals Park. The following requirements shall apply to Shared Riding:

- The Starter shall have the sole authority to determine when a taxicab shall depart after taking on passengers. When an initial passenger has been taken on, the Starter shall not unreasonably delay the departure of the taxicab for the purpose of securing additional passengers.
- The general direction of the destination of the first passenger shall determine the general direction of that particular trip. Other passengers whose destinations lie generally in that direction may be transported to the extent of the design capacity of the taxicab.
- Passengers shall be discharged in the order of the arrival at their respective destinations. In the event any questions arise as to the order of arrival at any destination, the question shall be resolved in favor of the passenger who entered the taxicab first.
- Passengers have the right to refuse Shared Riding.

Where Shared Riding is authorized in this chapter for Nationals Park, an operator shall not pick up a passenger except at the designated taxi stand, nor discharge a passenger except at the designated discharge stand. Nationals Park shall conspicuously post the designated taxi stand and discharge stands. Violations of this subsection are subject to a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100).

Directional Signs

Once the destination of the first passenger or first group of passengers to enter a taxicab has been determined, the driver may display a sign on the windshield which indicates the direction or location to be traveled.

No driver shall display any sign indicating the direction or location to be traveled until such time as a passenger has occupied the taxicab and the passenger's destination has been determined.

Directional signs displayed pursuant to this section shall be displayed at the bottom of the right half of the windshield so as to not obstruct the driver's vision. The signs shall be uniform in size and letters, and the letters shall be a minimum of two inches (2 in.) in height.

Dress Code of Operator

No person shall drive a taxicab for hire when the operator does any of the following:

- Is not clean in dress or in person,
- When answering a call or delivering a parcel,
- When not holding his or her vehicle for hire, in which event the identification card shall be removed from the taxicab, and the driver shall be away from the taxicab on business of his or her own.

Cleanliness of Cab

Each taxicab in service shall be kept clean both inside and out, including the trunk. The inside shall be kept in a sanitary condition and shall be swept and dusted thoroughly. The exterior shall be thoroughly cleaned.

**Identifying Common Customer Service
Mistakes**

Identifying Common Customer Service Mistakes

- **Trying to win an argument with a customer** – Arguing with a customer is bad business. You may win the argument, but you’ll probably lose the customer. Instead, show empathy. Tell the customer that you understand how he feels and that together you are going to find a solution to his problem.
- **Spending too much time with chronic complainers** – Some people will never be happy with your service. Do not take it personal and try to do your best. Focus on doing the right thing and provide the best service possible. Make note of the situation and if the customer complains you can easily pull up your notes and recall exactly what happened.
- **Taking criticism personally** – Most customers do not want to attack you personally. Although they may be lashing out at you, they are really more frustrated by the problem they face. Take their attention off you and place it squarely back on the problem.
- **Not acting like you care** –68 percent of customer defections take place because customer feels he has been treated poorly. Most customers do not expect an immediate resolution to their problem, but they do expect your concern. Routinely use terms like “sorry to keep you waiting” and “thanks for contacting us today.”
- **Not delivering what you promise** – Because some customers are continually misled by companies, they are understandably distrustful. For world-class service, deliver exactly what you promise. If it is “I’ll be there by 5:00pm” then try to be there by 4:50pm

Effective Ways of Dealing with Disgruntled Customers

Effective Ways of Dealing with Disgruntled Customers

- Show respect and courtesy, no matter what your customer's attitude.
- Your customer is upset with a situation, not with you.
- Listen with patience, do not interrupt.
- Apologize for the problem and empathize with your customer's feelings.
- Remain calm and avoid arguing.
- Ask for details in order to steer the conversation away from emotions.
- Use positive language that promotes cooperation. "Let's see what we can do."
- Involve your customer in finding a solution. Ask "What do you think would be fair?"
- If you get frustrated or angry, take a deep breath and stay committed to resolving the situation
- Establish trust by keeping your word. Do what you say you are going to do.

Extremely disgruntled and even violent customers:

- Do not put yourself at risk or in harm's way.
- Protect yourself at all times
- If you cannot resolve the issues peacefully please call the proper authorities

Fare dodgers:

- Do not chase people down in the streets
- Note as much as you can about the customer
 - Height and weight
 - Race, color, or accents
 - Clothing, tattoos, and anything identifiable

Note: Remember to do not to become part of the problem. Call the police immediately and allow the justice system to take its course.

Defining Internal vs. External Customers or Clients

Defining Internal Versus External Customers or Clients

WE ARE ALL CUSTOMERS AND WE ALL HAVE CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS

Internal Customers:

An “Internal Customer” is anyone living the Washington DC metropolitan area, a customer who know the area and how to get around. May even request a specific route to his/her destination

External Customers:

An “External Customer” is any individual that lives outside of the Washington DC metropolitan area. They may be in town on business or vacation but not familiar with the area. May ask about landmarks and restaurants and does not know the city like an “Internal Customer”.

**Effective Communication Styles Related to
Customer Service**

Effective Communication Styles Related to Customer Service

Non-verbal communication is said to account for as much as 93 % of a speaker's message. The numbers usually cited are 38% for vocal qualities, and 55% for facial expressions, gestures, and movements. Only 7% of the message is attributed to the words that are actually spoken.

Research shows that we start to make up our minds about other people within seven seconds of our first meeting! Much of this is unspoken because we are communicating with our eyes, faces, bodies and attitudes. Consciously or unconsciously, we are signaling to other people what our true feelings are and what we really want to happen in an encounter.

To be an effective communicator in the workplace, you must supplement your verbal message with non-verbal cues so that you clearly communicate what is truly important. Consider the following:

Facial Expression:

Your face displays an instant picture of the attitudes and emotions you wish to convey. Vary your facial expression to match the tone of the conversation. If you are excited, show it. Make an effort to smile when answering or addressing a customer in person. They will feel your energy.

Eye Contact:

Eye contact conveys your confidence and interest in the person you are communicating with. Make every effort to have eye contact each and every time you are dealing with a customer. When speaking to a group of customers, make every effort to show your eye contact to each and every member of the group at some point.

Gestures:

Use gestures to emphasize and reinforce statements. Allow gestures to flow naturally from your message.

Body Language:

In general, a relaxed stance and physical movements that complement and support your message are most effective. A rigid posture usually conveys nervousness and random walking or other movements tend to be distracting.

**Developing Customer Service Excellence
Plan**

Developing Customer Service Excellence Plan

The following list of items are sample customer service standards used by ER & Associates. Develop a list of standards for your office and post them for each staff member to review daily.

1. Be the first to say hello and smile when greeting co-workers and customers.
2. Be prompt, courteous and on time.
3. Recognize that your attire makes you feel better and speaks volumes to your co-workers and customers.
4. Develop methods for addressing problems with both our internal customers and our external clients.
5. Listen to your internal customers and accept critical criticism. Do not take it personally.
6. Watch for verbal and non-verbal signs that indicate that our internal customers or our external clients are not satisfied, or are concerned about something.
7. Be proactive in identifying and responding to problems.
8. Do what you say you will do, when you say you will do it.
9. Respect your customers' and clients' confidentiality at all times. Do not divulge information, gossip, or purposefully add chaos and confusion in the office.
10. Be knowledgeable about the city. Take time to know historical landmarks, events, and restaurants.

Customer Service Quiz

Customer Service Excellence Quiz

1. Who are your customers?
 - a. Think about your most obvious customers or clients – the three people for whom you routinely do the most. Identify them either by name or type (customer or client) Example: Susan (a co-worker) or Comcast (client).
 - b. Think about what you do for these clients and customers. List three customers and be prepared to share some of your experiences.

2. Name three positive customer service techniques
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

3. Name three negative customer service techniques
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

4. Who are considered your internal customers?

5. Who are considered your external customers?

6. Wearing colognes, perfumes, and aftershave is fine. The customer will appreciate it.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. You know the city much better than the customer, so ignore their request.
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. Why should you always ask the customer before you help with their luggage?

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9. Which one of the following is *not* good customer service?
- Smile and be courteous at all times.
 - Listen to your customer.
 - Do not make direct eye contact with the customer.
 - Be on time.
10. Which two *are* considered good customer service?
- Wearing your favorite cologne.
 - The customer knows best.
 - Refusing suggestions from friends and co-workers.
 - Keep your cab clean at all times.
11. Never listen to critics. You know what you are doing.
- True
 - False
12. Know your city and be prepared to offer suggestions on restaurants and historical places.
- True
 - False
13. Shared riding is only permitted at Union Station, Verizon Center, and _____.
14. Each taxicab in service should be kept clean both inside and out. Does this include the trunk?
- Yes
 - No
15. A driver can refuse group riding at any time.
- True
 - False