# Non-Emergency Call Handling

*Non-Emergency Call Handling* prepares public safety telecommunicators to provide professional, customer-focused service while managing administrative and non-emergency calls. The course emphasizes customer service, professionalism, first impressions, active listening, effective communication, telephone techniques, call transfers, evidence preservation, public education, and strategies for working with difficult callers. Learners examine how tone, attitude, empathy, courtesy, confidence, concern, and communication skills influence caller satisfaction and the public image of the agency.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Apply customer-service principles that promote positive interactions between the public and the communications center.
2. Demonstrate professional judgment and communication behaviors appropriate to administrative and non-emergency calls.
3. Determine an appropriate course of action based on the nature and urgency of a caller's request.
4. Gather, clarify, and verify information needed to address caller needs and support agency operations.
5. Adapt listening and communication techniques to overcome barriers and improve understanding.
6. Use vocal delivery, language, and feedback techniques to establish confidence and rapport with callers.
7. Manage routine telephone interactions, referrals, and transfers while maintaining continuity of service.
8. Apply appropriate actions to help protect information, evidence, and scene integrity when circumstances require it.
9. Manage challenging caller interactions while maintaining composure, professionalism, and a customer-service focus.

# Module 1: Delivering Customer Service as a Telecommunicator

This module introduces customer service as a fundamental responsibility of the public safety telecommunicator. Learners examine the difference between ordinary and excellent customer service, the effect of individual interactions on agency image, customer satisfaction practices, customer service goals, empathy and apathy, telephone voice personality, communication barriers, and the importance of treating even difficult customers with respect.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Evaluate caller interactions from a customer-service perspective and determine how they may influence public perception of the agency.
2. Demonstrate behaviors that communicate respect and responsiveness even when a caller is frustrated or demanding.
3. Adapt communication style to meet the needs and expectations of different callers.
4. Assess how personal attitude and emotional response can influence the quality of service provided.
5. Apply a customer-focused approach that balances caller needs with the responsibilities of the communications center.

**Content/Activities**

- Customer Service and Attaining Excellent Customer Service
- Video: *Starbucks Customer Service*
- Agency Image and Customer Satisfaction
- Video: *Phoenix at Your Service*
- Customer Service Goals, Empathy, and Apathy
- Telephone Voice Personality and Communication Barriers
- Video: *The Difficult Guest*
- Brainteasers

# Module 2: The Professional Telecommunicator

This module focuses on professional development and the standards expected of public safety telecommunicators. Learners examine public education regarding emergency versus non-emergency calls, continuous improvement, professional behavior, competence, reliability, integrity, respect, communication skills, patience, empathy, teamwork, and the characteristics of successful telecommunicators.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Exercise professional judgment when determining whether a caller's situation requires emergency or non-emergency resources.
2. Communicate service options in a manner that helps members of the public make appropriate use of emergency communications systems.
3. Demonstrate behaviors that reinforce credibility, reliability, integrity, and public trust.
4. Evaluate personal performance to identify opportunities for continued professional growth.
5. Apply patience, empathy, teamwork, and effective communication when carrying out telecommunicator responsibilities.

**Content/Activities**

- Public Education: Reporting Non-Emergencies
- Video: *Bogus 911 Calls on the Rise*
- When to Call 911
- Improved Customer Service
- Components of Continuous Improvement
- Steps to Professional Development
- Professional Approach and Successful Telecommunicator Attributes
- Brainteasers

# Module 3: Agency First Impressions and the Telecommunicator

This module examines how telecommunicators shape public perception of their agency through call handling. Learners review departmental expectations, internal customers, the Journalistic Investigative Approach, non-emergency roles, evidence preservation, caller responsiveness, public expectations, the Reaction Principle, 311-type information responsibilities, the Three C's of Effective Communication, positive language, and the risks of becoming complacent during routine calls.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Formulate purposeful questions that obtain sufficient information to determine how a caller should be assisted.
2. Adapt call-handling decisions to meet both caller needs and departmental responsibilities.
3. Provide instructions that help callers avoid compromising evidence or disturbing a scene while awaiting assistance.
4. Communicate in a manner that establishes credibility and reassures callers that their concerns are being addressed.
5. Maintain appropriate vigilance during routine calls so that potentially serious circumstances are not overlooked.

**Content/Activities**

- Department Expectations and Internal Customers
- Journalistic Investigative Approach
- Non-Emergency Roles and Responsibilities
- Non-Emergency PAIs and Preservation of Physical Evidence
- Audio: *Missing Wife*
- Reaction Principle and Public Expectations
- Three C's: Courtesy, Confidence, and Concern
- 300 Call Syndrome and Brainteasers

# Module 4: Listening: Our Primary Function

This module emphasizes active listening as a core telecommunicator skill. Learners distinguish listening from hearing, identify barriers to effective listening, assess their own habits, reduce distractions, adjust to shift-work challenges, verify information, listen for red flags, and apply practical techniques that improve comprehension and caller communication.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Interpret caller statements for both explicitly stated information and details that may indicate an underlying concern.
2. Evaluate how distractions, assumptions, pre-judgment, and personal habits can affect information accuracy.
3. Modify listening behaviors to improve concentration and comprehension during telephone interactions.
4. Verify critical information before making decisions or communicating information to others.
5. Recognize verbal cues and inconsistencies that warrant additional questioning or clarification.

**Content/Activities**

- Listening as the Primary Communications Activity
- Barriers to Good Listening
- Listening Skills Self-Test
- Video: *Phone Customer Service*
- Eliminating Distractions
- Adjusting to Shift Work
- Keys to Effective Listening
- Brainteasers

# Module 5: The Communication Process

This module explores how messages are sent, received, interpreted, and affected by communication barriers. Learners examine telephone voice personality, tone, inflection, feedback, semantics, personalities, attitudes, perception, language, emotional and physical barriers, and the use of positive communication to reassure callers and improve customer service.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Adjust vocal delivery to convey professionalism, interest, confidence, and responsiveness during caller interactions.
2. Interpret caller feedback to determine whether information has been accurately understood.
3. Use clarification and verification techniques to reduce misunderstandings and improve information accuracy.
4. Adapt messages when differences in language, emotion, perception, or attitude interfere with communication.
5. Reframe potentially negative messages using constructive language without compromising accuracy or agency responsibilities.

**Content/Activities**

- Telephone Voice Personality
- Tone of Voice and Inflection
- Video: *Professional Phone Etiquette*
- Components of Communications
- Communication Process Model
- Employing Feedback
- Communication Barriers and Positive Attitudes
- Video: *Customer Service Attitude* and Brainteasers

# Module 6: Telephone Answering Techniques for Administrative Calls

This module provides practical telephone techniques for handling administrative and non-emergency calls professionally. Learners examine when to let callers speak without interruption, how to request clarification politely, use direct and indirect questioning, personalize calls, explain delays, transfer callers appropriately, and maintain Courtesy, Confidence, and Concern throughout the interaction.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Manage the flow of an administrative call without unnecessarily interrupting or frustrating the caller.
2. Select questioning techniques that efficiently obtain missing or unclear information.
3. Explain delays, holds, and other call-handling actions in ways that maintain caller confidence.
4. Determine when a transfer or referral is appropriate and facilitate it without unnecessarily shifting responsibility back to the caller.
5. Conclude administrative calls in a manner that confirms the caller's needs have been addressed and leaves a professional final impression.

**Content/Activities**

- Let the Caller Speak Without Interruption
- Asking the Caller to Repeat Information
- Telephone Techniques
- Call Handling Techniques
- Video: *Professional Phone Etiquette*
- Transferring Calls Diplomatically
- Three C's in Administrative Calls
- Brainteasers
-

# Module 7: Dealing with Difficult Callers

This module focuses on maintaining professionalism when callers are upset, demanding, frustrated, or difficult to satisfy. Learners examine the importance of not taking caller emotions personally, demonstrating concern, listening carefully, encouraging callers to explain their concerns fully, and responding to complaints with respect, empathy, courtesy, and professionalism.

**Module Objectives**

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Maintain emotional control and professional behavior when confronted with anger, frustration, or criticism.
2. Adapt communication strategies to reduce conflict while continuing to obtain the information needed to assist the caller.
3. Separate a caller's emotional response from the underlying issue requiring attention.
4. Demonstrate understanding without making commitments or assurances beyond the telecommunicator's authority.
5. Guide challenging interactions toward an appropriate resolution while preserving caller dignity and agency professionalism.

**Content/Activities**

- Dealing with Difficult Callers
- Maintaining Professionalism During Conflict
- Demonstrating Concern
- Active Listening with Difficult Customers
- Encouraging Full Caller Explanations
- Video: *Customer Complaints*
- Module Conclusion
- Brainteasers

# Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within one hour.

- CE hours awarded: 2
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

## Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser