



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report To:	Council
From:	Tash Harriott, Director, Communications & Customer Experience
Date:	July 13, 2026
Report No:	CORS-017-26
Subject:	Customer Service Standards & Customer Code of Conduct
Recommendation:	THAT Council receive this report;

And THAT Council endorse the Town of Milton's Customer Service Standards, attached as Appendix I;

And THAT Council approve the Town of Milton's Customer Code of Conduct, attached as Appendix II.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Town of Milton is committed to delivering effective, high-quality service and an exceptional customer experience that responds to the needs of a growing community.
- A Customer Service Strategy was identified as a priority in the Town's Council-Staff Work Plan, 2020-2023. The Customer Service Standards and Customer Code of Conduct build on the findings and recommendations within the Strategy by establishing consistent standards and expectations for staff and customers.
- Together, these frameworks set clear expectations for staff and customers and support continuous, data-driven improvement. This initiative supports a consistent, measurable, and accountable approach.
- Supporting actions include public awareness, facility signage, staff training, and a centralized approach to tracking and reporting service trends.
- Staff have confirmed with the Integrity Commissioner that the Customer Service Standards and Customer Code of Conduct should not apply to or include Members of Council, as these standards are intended to support the operations and service delivery of the organization.

REPORT

Background

The development of a Customer Service Strategy was identified as a priority in the Town's Council-Staff Work Plan, 2020-2023. In May 2021, the Town retained Boulevard Strategy Group to work with employees across the organization to develop a Customer Service Strategy. Key findings included:

- Customer service should be grounded in a strong, organization-wide culture of service.
- Enhancing data collection and performance tracking will support more evidence-based decision-making.
- Streamlined access points and empowered frontline staff will improve first-contact resolution and reduce duplication and escalation.
- Strong collaboration with Council is essential to support informed decisions and effective service to the community.

The Customer Service Standards and Customer Code of Conduct build on the findings and recommendations within the Customer Service Strategy by establishing consistent standards and expectations for staff and customers.

Discussion

Council endorsement of the Customer Service Standards and approval of the Customer Code of Conduct will provide a consistent corporate framework for service delivery and customer interactions. The frameworks complement each other: the Standards outline how the Town will serve customers, while the Code outlines how customers are expected to engage with the Town. Together, they set the stage for staff and customers to co-create an environment of mutual respect and positive customer experiences.

Customer Service Standards

The Customer Service Standards define how the Town of Milton delivers customer service, including response timelines, consistency, accessibility, and professionalism across service channels. The standards apply to Town employees, representatives (hired on behalf of the Town), and volunteers. They outline expectations for customer interactions by phone, email, in person, and through webforms.

The Standards help ensure customers receive equitable, barrier-free, and high-quality service, regardless of how they contact the Town. Customers can expect:

Discussion

- Accessible and inclusive service
- Timely responses
- Respectful and consistent interactions
- Warm transfers

For telephone inquiries, calls are answered promptly and in the order received, with protocols used to minimize transfers. The standards also include timely voicemail responses and updated out-of-office greetings when applicable. For written communication, the standards include response or acknowledgement timelines of two business days for email and 15 business days for letters and faxes. For in-person inquiries, customers are served in the order of arrival, provided with clear next steps, and staff are expected to be punctual for scheduled appointments.

Overall, the Customer Service Standards focus on responsiveness, accessibility, and accountability across the organization.

Customer Code of Conduct

The Customer Code of Conduct outlines expected customer behaviour when interacting with the Town. It reinforces shared responsibility for respectful interactions and helps keep services, facilities, and programs safe and accessible for everyone. The Code applies to customer interactions with Town employees, volunteers, and representatives (hired on behalf of the Town) across all communication channels.

The Code outlines unacceptable behaviour under two main areas:

Safety, legal, and policy violations:

- Harassment or discriminatory remarks
- Aggressive or violent actions
- Criminal activity (e.g., theft, vandalism, weapons, substance misuse, etc.)
- Actions that compromise safety or violate by-laws/policies

Persistent demands and lack of cooperation:

- Repeated or excessive demands beyond service standards
- Challenging resolved decisions repeatedly
- Vexatious, frivolous, or intentionally disruptive communication
- Refusal to cooperate with processes or investigations

Discussion

- Misrepresentation of information or repeated unfounded complaints

The Code empowers employees to manage situations through escalation after reasonable efforts have been made to resolve the issue. It protects staff, customers, and service delivery by clearly defining boundaries and consequences for unacceptable conduct.

Customer feedback

Customer feedback was collected through an online customer experience survey launched for a three-week period and promoted through the Town's social media channels, website, and service counters. The survey received 322 responses and reinforced the need for clear service standards, better access to information, and defined escalation paths.

Key themes

- Most respondents were residents, and many interact with the Town less than monthly.
- Customers identified accurate information, quick response times, clear explanations, and communication during delays as important service priorities.
- The survey demonstrates broad public support for Town staff taking reasonable actions, including ending interactions, escalating to supervisors, or involving security when faced with disrespectful or unsafe customer behaviour.

Phased implementation plan

Implementation of the Customer Service Standards and Customer Code of Conduct requires a coordinated, phased approach. The first phase of the roll out will focus on public education, staff training, facility signage, and enhanced customer experience tracking and reporting. The next phase will focus on continuous improvement and monitoring.

Financial Impact

Costs associated with the implementation plan are included in Customer Service Strategy Implementation capital budget C10013124.

Respectfully submitted,



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

Report #:
CORS-017-26
Page 5 of 5

Tash Harriott
Director, Communications & Customer Experience

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Attachments

Appendix I - Customer Service Standards

Appendix II - Customer Code of Conduct

CAO Approval
Andrew M. Siltala
Chief Administrative Officer

Recognition of Traditional Lands

The Town of Milton resides on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee people. The Town of Milton shares this land and the responsibility for the water, food and resources. We stand as allies with the First Nations as stewards of these lands.



The Corporation of the Town of Milton

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Appendix I - Customer Service Standards

POLICY: Customer Service Standards	POLICY NO.: TBD
SECTION: TBD	NO. OF PAGES: 05
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 13, 2026	REVISED: n/a

1. Policy statement

The Corporation of the Town of Milton is committed to exceptional customer service. These standards ensure customers are served respectfully, consistently, and within reasonable timelines.

2. Purpose

This policy establishes clear customer service standards that reflect the Town's commitment to equity, fairness, inclusivity, accessibility, and service excellence.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all interactions between customers and Town employees, volunteers, and representatives (hired on behalf of the Town), across all intake channels. These standards apply unless otherwise stated on the Town's website and should be interpreted together with the Customer Code of Conduct.

4. Definitions

- a. **Customer** is any individual, business, property owner, or visitor seeking a service from the Town or attending an event, program, or facility operated by the Town of Milton.
- b. **Employee** includes full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees, contractors, student workers, and volunteers delivering service on behalf of the Town.
- c. **Intake channels** refer to how customers may be received and interacted with by the Town and include in person, over the phone, by voicemail, by email, and through webform submissions.
- d. **Non-traditional hours** refer to work schedules that fall outside the standard business hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This includes, but is not limited to, shift work, on-call duties, and contract-based work arrangements.
- e. **One business day** refers to the next business day during the Town's regular operating hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Although some Town facilities and services may operate on weekends and/or statutory holidays, within this policy these days are excluded from the definition of business day.

- f. **Warm transfer** means handing a customer off while keeping them informed, explaining who they're going to and why, and sharing their details with the next team, so they don't have to repeat themselves.

5. Customers' right to service

Customers have the right to timely, inclusive, barrier-free, and accessible service from the Town of Milton when making requests or inquiries, within the Town's scope and compliant with the Customer Code of Conduct. These standards apply across all intake channels. Every Town of Milton employee plays a role in providing excellent customer service and making sure everyone they interact with feels welcomed, respected, and valued.

6. Policy

a. Telephone / mobile device

- i. **Call-answering:** Employees are expected to answer phone calls promptly and in the order they are received, unless there is an urgent matter or emergency.

Employees will make every reasonable effort to resolve inquiries without unnecessary transfers. If a transfer is needed, employees are expected to use warm transfers to connect customers with the right team.

- ii. **Voicemail management:** Employees will respond to voicemail messages within two business days to acknowledge receipt or provide a response. Employees must maintain an up-to-date voicemail greeting that includes their name or, for shared voicemail boxes, the name of the department. If away for more than one business day, employees must update their greeting to include a return date and alternate contact. Employees are expected to check voicemail daily; messages should be addressed within one business day of returning from an absence. Employees who work non-traditional hours may include a notation in their voicemail greeting indicating that they operate outside regular business hours and that response times may vary.

b. Written correspondence (email, letter, memo, fax, etc.)

- i. **Emails:** Employees are expected to respond to emails within two business days to acknowledge receipt or provide a response. Employees must use an out-of-office email message when away for more than one business day, including return date and alternate contact. Employees who work non-traditional hours may include a notation in their email signature indicating that they operate outside regular business hours and that response times may vary.
- ii. **Shared mailboxes:** Teams responsible for shared inboxes must use automated responses or templates that acknowledge incoming emails have been received and outline next steps or response times. Supervisors are expected to maintain a clear coverage schedule showing who monitors and responds to incoming requests.
- iii. **Faxes, letters, and memos:** Employees will acknowledge or respond to a customer's correspondence within 15 business days of receiving it.

c. Digital communication

- i. **Social media:** Employees monitor social media channels periodically during business hours. Responses through this channel may be delayed. Customers are encouraged to use official intake channels for service-related requests.
- ii. **Webforms:** Webforms should send automated responses that acknowledge receipt of the webform submission and outline the next steps and expected timelines. Unless otherwise stated, employees are expected to respond to webform submissions within two business days.

d. In person

- i. **Town facilities and customer service counters:** Customers will be served in order of arrival unless they have an appointment. When employees support multiple intake channels, in-person customers are expected to take priority.
- ii. **Walk-in inquiries:** The Town welcomes customers who attend Town facilities without an appointment and will make every reasonable

effort to connect them with the appropriate employee, team, or service area to support their inquiry. Walk-in customers will be served in the order of arrival, where possible. While employees will do their best to assist, the Town cannot guarantee that a specific employee will be available or that an immediate appointment can be provided.

- iii. **Appointments, home visits, and field inspections:** Employees are expected to arrive on time for scheduled commitments. If running more than five minutes late, employees are expected to let the customer know as soon as possible using a safe method of contact (for example, employees must not text a customer while driving). During the interaction, employees must ensure customers understand the purpose of the visit, next steps, and any required follow up.

e. After-hours inquiries

General inquiries received after hours will be considered received on the next business day.

f. Warm transfers (all intake channels)

Employees are expected to use warm transfers whenever directing a customer to another employee, team, or service area. This means:

- Confirming the correct contact before transferring.
- Providing relevant details to the receiving employee.
- Ensuring the customer understands next steps.

g. Connecting customers with the right support

The Town will make every reasonable effort to connect customers with the appropriate employee, team, or service area to support their inquiry. While customers may request to speak with or receive a response from a specific employee, the Town cannot guarantee that a particular individual will be available or assigned to the matter. Inquiries may be directed to another qualified employee or team to ensure the customer receives timely and appropriate support.

h. Accessible, barrier-free customer service

Employees must take reasonable steps to ensure all customers can access Town services, programs, and facilities. If a customer requests accommodation,

employees will work with the customer to provide appropriate support, as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Town's Accessible Customer Service Guidelines.

- Ask customers what they need and confirm their preferred way to communicate (for example, in writing, by phone, or in person).
- Offer information in alternative formats or provide communication support, when available and appropriate.
- Welcome customers who use assistive devices and, where permitted by law, service animals and support persons.
- If an accommodation cannot be arranged immediately, explain next steps and involve a supervisor/manager for support.

Employees must provide notice of service disruptions as soon as possible and assist customers in finding alternative support when needed.

i. Customer feedback and escalation

Each division is responsible for collecting and monitoring customer feedback and escalations. Each division is also expected to have clear escalation procedures that allow customers to:

- Speak with an employee's supervisor or manager, if requested.
- Escalate to the division head if the matter is unresolved.

This information must be retained for five years and available to be shared with the Customer Experience division, Strategic Management Team, or CAO's office, if requested.

j. Resolution

If a solution cannot be provided within the expected timeline, employees must communicate an estimated response date. Total resolution time should not exceed fifteen business days unless otherwise communicated.

7. Service standards during emergencies and high-volume periods

During significant weather events, emergencies, service disruptions, or periods of unusually high inquiry volumes, the response timelines in this policy may be temporarily suspended or adjusted. The Town will prioritize urgent and safety-related matters and make reasonable efforts to communicate delays and resume regular service standards as soon as operationally possible.



8. Customer requests that demonstrate unacceptable behaviours

Employees may limit or end communication if a customer behaves abusively, aggressively, or unreasonably in accordance with the Town's Customer Code of Conduct.

9. Responsibilities

- a. Employees are responsible for complying with this policy.
- b. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring service performance and ensuring compliance with response timelines.

Division heads are responsible for ensuring their teams comply with this policy and for working with the Town's Customer Experience team to identify service trends, address opportunities for improvement, and support continuous improvement within their areas.

10. Compliance

All divisions are expected to comply with this policy. Corrective actions for non-compliance with this policy may include coaching, training, process supports, additional monitoring or quality checks, and other remedies in line with the Town's policies.



Appendix II - Customer Code of Conduct

Town of Milton Customer Code of Conduct

Purpose

The Town of Milton is committed to providing excellent service and ensuring everyone is treated with respect. This code outlines expected behaviour when customers interact with employees or use Town facilities, parks, programs, or services, and explains what happens if behaviour creates safety concerns or disrupts service.

Scope

This code applies to all interactions between customers and Town employees and representatives (hired on behalf of the Town). Interactions may happen in person, by phone, by email, online, and through written communication.

Definitions

Customer is any individual, business, property owner, or visitor seeking a service from the Town or attending an event or facility operated by the Town of Milton.

Employees include full-time, part-time, contract, and seasonal employees, representatives hired on behalf of the Town, students, and volunteers delivering service on behalf of the Town.

Code of conduct overview

In alignment with the Town's Customer Service Standards, the Town is committed to respectful, service excellence, and expects the same in return. Customers are expected to interact with the Town in a respectful, cooperative, and appropriate manner that supports safe and positive experiences for customers, employees, and the broader community.

Unacceptable behaviour

Examples of conduct that may be considered unacceptable behavior while accessing Town programs, services, events, or facilities are outlined below. This list is not exhaustive, and the Town reserves the right to assess each incident on a case-by-case basis to determine whether unacceptable behavior has occurred.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour related to safety, policy or legal violations:

- **Verbal or written behaviour:** including swearing, discriminatory remarks, screaming, yelling, harassment, or intentionally provoking others.
- **Physical behaviour:** including aggressive movements, throwing objects, or hitting, invasion of personal space or hovering over others.
- **Illegal activity:** including threats, theft, vandalism, illegal drug/alcohol use, weapons.
- **Safety concerns:** including any behaviour that compromises public or employee safety.
- **Policy violations:** including breaching Town by-laws, permits, policies guidelines or other forms of direction.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour related to persistent demands and lack of cooperation:

- **Unreasonable timelines:** including repeated requests for responses faster than the Town's Customer Service Standards allow.
- **Disputing resolved matters:** including, continuing to challenge decisions after they have been reviewed and finalized.
- **Vexatious, frivolous, or excessive communication:** including submitting complaints or messages intended to harass, intimidate, effect retribution or place an unnecessary burden on employees or members of the community, repeatedly contacting multiple employees about the same issue or continuing to reach out after being asked to stop.
- **Lack of cooperation:** including refusing to participate in a complaint or investigation processes while still seeking service.
- **Undermining communication:** including withholding key information, misrepresenting facts, or making repeated unfounded complaints.

Guidelines

When a customer displays unacceptable behaviour, employees may:

- Ask the customer to stop the behaviour.
- Remind the customer of the expectations in this Code of Conduct.
- End the interaction or ask the customer to leave the area, program, or facility.
- Escalate the issue to management.

If the behaviour is unsafe or escalates to violence or the threat of violence, employees may involve security or law enforcement to remove the individual, in line with the Town's Workplace Violence Policy.

If unacceptable behaviour continues, becomes repetitive, or involves a significant incident, the Town will move forward with escalation. Escalation may result in bans or restrictions from Town facilities and programs, restrictions regarding communications, and legal or other measures deemed appropriate by the Town.

Before escalating a situation, the division head or their designate will ensure:

- The customer's request has been handled appropriately and follows procedures.
- Employees have made reasonable efforts to resolve the matter.

Responsibilities

- Customers and employees are responsible for complying with this procedure.
- Supervisors/managers are responsible for complying with this procedure, maintaining escalation processes, and managing records of Customer Code of Conduct violations and decisions.
- Division heads and/or commissioners are responsible for reviewing information provided by Town employees and assisting with determining a resolution, as required.

Appeal

Customers may appeal a decision related to this Code of Conduct through the Ontario Ombudsman. The [Ontario Ombudsman](#) is an objective office of last resort for members of the public looking to bring forward an unresolved complaint. Acting independent of Town Council, the Ontario Ombudsman will receive, review, and investigate complaints, provide periodic updates, and produce an annual report of activities.