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<b>Title</b> Customer Service	<b>Date</b> 11/18/2018
<b>CDE Number</b> (G)-1811001	<b>CDE Credit Hours</b> 1 HRS

## Customer Service

Trying to find the definition of customer service is like trying to describe what Coke tastes like.

I decided to turn to the internet for help and found the following:

On Wikipedia "Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. According to Turban et al. (2002),<sup>[1]</sup> "Customer service is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation."

Customerservicemanager.com lists "Customer service is often seen as an activity, performance measurement, and a philosophy. Here are some definitions of customer service in use today":

- "Customer service is the ability to provide a service or product in the way that it has been promised"
- "Customer service is about treating others as you would like to be treated yourself."
- "Customer Service is a phrase that is used to describe the process of taking care of our customers in a positive manner."
- "Customer Service is any contact between a customer and a company, that causes a negative or positive perception by a customer."

Customer service is a big part of everyday life. We experience customer service throughout our day ranging from interactions with the coffee house Barista to our co-workers and family members. When most people think of customer service, they aren't thinking of public safety, let alone 911. However, customer service is just as crucial to public safety as it is to corporate America.

Now in public safety, we don't have to spend millions of dollars on advertisements to have people call 911 for help. However, people still expect a certain level of service. People assume that when they call 911 the operator will be professional, knowledgeable, and compassionate. Long gone are the days when 911 operators were considered secretaries or file clerks. The modern day 911 operator is a professional that spends many hours training and is expected to have the same knowledge of a firefighter, police officer, social worker, and lawyer. Not only are 911 operators required to send help to the scene, but they also need to provide instructions to the callers until help arrives all from a remote place in a visually deprived environment.

One of the most often overlooked elements of a successful emergency call is customer service. Most people can go through their lives and never have to call 911 but if they do it is a very traumatic experience. The last thing people need in a time of crisis is a call taker or dispatcher that is rude, sarcastic, or, condescending. One of my favorite movie quotes comes from the movie Road House starring Patrick Swayze. In the film, he is explaining the rules to being a successful bouncer. One of the rules is "Be nice." No matter what the other person does the bouncer is to be nice. This pretty simple concept or rule equally applies to 911. No matter how the caller acts on the phone, we still can be nice.

When someone first starts their career in the communications/911 center, they are energetic, excited, and want to help people. After years of hearing the same complaints and doing the same job, people can become complacent, bored, or even disrespectful and sarcastic. Just remember that this might be the 50<sup>th</sup> 911 call you answered today, but this might be the first time that caller has ever called 911. The caller can be afraid, concerned and anxious. I am a big believer that you need to treat every caller as if you were talking to one of your relatives. Bottom line is they are someone's relative, and the caller is to be treated with respect.

To understand the importance of customer service in the 911 center; read any negative news article on 911, and you will find the most common complaint is that the call taker was rude or some other customer service related behavior. When the crisis is over people will remember how they felt the 911 operator treated them. The recording doesn't lie and always seems to sound worse when it is broadcasted on CNN or any other news source.

“While we can’t save everyone, we can *help* everyone” (Principles of EMD 4<sup>th</sup> edition page 5.11). The help we give can come in many forms from giving CPR instructions to a patient in cardiac arrest or to simply comforting a parent whose child is ill. In the simplest of terms **“Be Nice.”**

# Customer Service CDE Quiz

Please complete the following Quiz and Acknowledgement for 15 minutes of CDE credit.

- 1.) People expect that when they call 911 the operator will be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2.) Most negative articles about 911 are about?
- 3.) True/False. The modern day 911 operator is a trained professional.
- 4.) If a caller is yelling and doesn't understand why help is not on scene yet, the call taker must still \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5.) True/False. The public expects the 911 operator to provide instructions in a time of crisis.

<b>Title</b> Customer Service	<b>Date</b> 11/16/2018
<b>CDE Number</b> (M,P,F)-YYMM00#	<b>CDE Credit Hours</b> ## HRS

I verify that I read and am familiar with the contents of this document.

Please return this to your agency's training coordinator for CDE credit. If you have any questions please contact us at [911training@elpasoteller911.org](mailto:911training@elpasoteller911.org)

X \_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
**Agency**