

# COUNTY OF TULARE

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

### ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION NO.22 (Resolution No.99-0053)

**SUBJECT: COUNTY-WIDE TELEPHONE POLICY**

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 12, 1999

#### Definition

The intent of this policy is to ensure that citizens of this county can access county departments, through telephone contact, with relative ease, by standardizing our phone systems and procedures.

This regulation establishes the guidelines and procedures to be followed for the answering, processing and transferring of telephone calls.

#### PROCEDURE

##### ANSWERING THE PHONE: Two Options

1) The phone should be answered by an employee (not an electronic recording), before the third ring. The receptionist should use a standard salutation: "(Department name/program name), this is (receptionists name), May I help you?"

For example: "County Administrative Office, this is Susanne, May I help you?"

The receptionist should determine who the call is for and should determine where that person is, ie: available, out of the office, etc.

When callers need to be placed on hold: Callers should have "easy listening" music (or County information or statistics) to listen to. No call should be on hold for more than one minute without the receptionist checking back with the caller.

If the requested individual is not available, the receptionist should offer to take a message or if it is available, to transfer the caller to the persons voice mail. If the caller requests to leave a message with the receptionist, a written message should be taken.

If it is not possible to answer the phone by the third ring, the department should have a message which tells caller that their call will be answered in the order received,

OR

2) Phone systems with electronic messages and automated options should have only one menu with a maximum of 4 options to choose from. The first option should be to dial zero to reach a receptionist. There should **not** be several layers of menus or options for the caller to have to listen and/or respond to.

The standard salutation for automated phone systems should be as follows:

You have reached (Department Name/Program Name), at (phone number dialed) your call is important to us, if you would like to speak to the receptionist, please dial zero now, .....(then up to three other options - to be set by the department).....Thank you for calling Tulare County (department name/program name).

Voice mail messages should have the option of either leaving a message or dialing out to speak with the receptionist.