



ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Office of the City Administrator

Number: 114
Sections: 1-6
Effective Date: 5/5/03

SUBJECT: Procedures for Processing Citizen Inquiries/Comments to the City Council or City Administrator

1. **Purpose:** To develop procedures for responding to citizen inquiries or complaints addressed to the City Council or City Administrator in a timely manner.
2. **Authority:** Huntington Beach City Charter, Section 401
3. **Application:** All city departments.
4. **Definitions:**
 - 4.1 Citizen Inquiry or Complaint: Any letter, e-mail, phone call, voice mail, or walk-in request addressed to the City Council or the City Administrator. This Administrative Regulation does not refer to follow-up requests made by the City Council during the Public Comment portion of City Council meetings. The City Administrator's Office (CAO) processes those requests separately.
 - 4.2 Types of Inquiries:
 - Standard: Inquiries that require a response from staff.
 - Reoccurring/Ongoing: Ongoing individual service requests/situations (typically tree removals, curb/gutter replacement, standing water, etc.).
 - Public Forum: Opinions/Comments regarding citywide issues (e.g. DARE, dog park, etc.).
 - Thanks/Commendation: Correspondence thanking the City Council or staff.
 - Indirect: Correspondence listing the City Council or City Administrator as a "copy." Often these inquiries are addressed to other governmental agencies or department heads.
 - 4.3 Referral Department: The department(s) that has been identified by the CAO to respond to a specific inquiry.
 - 4.4 Citizen Inquiry Coordinator (CIC): The person responsible for coordinating the processing of all citizen inquiry responses for the CAO.
 - 4.5 Department Coordinator (DC): The person within each department assigned to monitor and expedite the department's response.

5. Policy:

- 5.1 Performance standards have been established for each of the five types of inquiries:
- Standard: 15 calendar days from date of receipt by the CAO.
 - Reoccurring/Ongoing: 15 calendar days from date of receipt by the CAO.
 - Public Forum: 24 hours from date of receipt by the CAO.
 - Thanks/Commendation: 72 hours from date of receipt by the CAO.
 - Indirect: 24 hours from date of receipt by the CAO.
- 5.2 The performance standards for processing inquiries are considered to have been met under the following conditions:
- 5.2.1 Standard:
- When the resident and the CIC have received a response. The response may be forwarded according to any of the following:
 - a. Copy of the response letter sent to the resident.
 - b. Copy of e-mail forwarded to resident (if responding by e-mail).
 - c. A telephone record describing conversation and actions to be taken.
- 5.2.2 Reoccurring/Ongoing:
- When the DC, the CIC, and/or appropriate division head have developed an appropriate course of action and the resident has been notified.
- 5.2.3 Public Forum:
- When the CIC has responded to the resident via e-mail or postcard acknowledging receipt of correspondence.
- 5.2.4 Thanks/Commendation:
- When the CIC has forwarded a letter from the Mayor acknowledging receipt of his/her letter of thanks.
- 5.2.5 Indirect:
- When copies of the correspondence to the City Council have been distributed.

6. Procedures:

- 6.1 Standard: 15-Calendar Day Turnaround Performance Measure
- 6.1.1 The CIC forwards and assigns the inquiry to the appropriate department(s).
 - 6.1.2 The CIC forwards a standard inquiry response postcard or e-mail to the resident within 24 hours (Exhibit A).
 - 6.1.3 The CIC hand delivers the inquiry (within 24 hours) to the DC (Exhibit B).
 - 6.1.4 The CIC distributes copies to the City Council.
 - 6.1.5 If no response is received within 15 calendar days, the DC will be notified.
 - 6.1.6 Upon receipt of follow-up documentation, the CIC redistributes to the City Council and closes file.

6.2 Reoccurring/Ongoing: 15-Calendar Day Turnaround Performance Measure

- 6.2.1 The CIC forwards the inquiry and contacts the appropriate DC and/or Division Head to determine best course of action.
- 6.2.2 An action plan is developed and reviewed with the Mayor which may include, but not be limited to, the following alternative actions:
 - a) Send standard inquiry response postcard (if further fieldwork is required before an action plan can be developed).
 - b) Preparation of an "Unable to Respond" letter signed by the Mayor, but jointly prepared by the CAO and the referral department. A Fact Sheet explaining city guidelines may be included.
 - c) Schedule meeting with the resident(s), the Mayor, and appropriate staff.
 - d) Refer tree issues to Beautification, Landscape and Tree (BLT) Committee as directed by CAO for resolution.

6.3 Public Forum: 24-Hour Turnaround Performance Measure

- 6.3.1 The CIC logs in the inquiry, distributes copies to the City Council and referral department, and forwards the "Thanks for Comments" postcard (Exhibit C). No further action by the referral department is required.

6.4 Thanks/Commendation: 72-Hour Turnaround Performance Measure

- 6.4.1 The CIC logs in the inquiry, distributes copies to the City Council and referral department, and forwards the standard "Thanks" letter (Exhibit D) from the Mayor. No further action by the referral department is required.

6.5 Indirect:

- 6.5.1 The CIC logs in the inquiry and distributes to the City Council and referral department. No further action is taken by the CAO.

Ray Silver
City Administrator