

OFFICE OF THE CENTER DIRECTOR

Telephone Coverage Policy

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PURPOSE

- This MAPP describes the role in the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) and responsibilities of staff members in ensuring telephone coverage and the procedures to be used for establishing telephone coverage throughout the Center.
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BACKGROUND

- As Federal employees and public servants, CDER employees should be responsive to the needs of the public. The public's first line of contact with CDER is often a telephone call. It is incumbent upon all CDER employees to be pleasant and responsive when answering any telephone call. All callers expect to be able to speak to an individual during normal business hours.
 - The Center Director has notified all CDER staff that all CDER organizational main phone lines are expected to be covered by a staff member during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., local time.
 - This policy has been established (1) to facilitate telephone communication with the public and among staff members and (2) to standardize procedures for handling the telephones.
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POLICY

- CDER offices and divisions will maintain live telephone coverage of all main lines during the specified times. Normal business hours are Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., local time.
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- All CDER managers will support this commitment and communicate this policy to their respective staffs.
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PROCEDURES

- CDER staff members are expected to answer main telephone lines during normal business hours. The staff members answering the telephone will identify the office and/or division, and will conduct the call in a courteous, professional, and efficient manner. If the entire staff of an office or division must be absent from the office for a period of time during business hours (e.g., all-hands meetings, holiday parties, retreats, team building), the main line for that unit should be forwarded to another office during that time. The referring office should be able to courteously and professionally take messages and reroute calls as needed.
 - Each CDER organization (e.g., division, team, branch) will coordinate and establish a plan that will ensure live telephone coverage during business hours.
 - Individuals answering telephones will offer to take a message, (e.g., date, time, name, telephone number, reason for the call) if the employee being called is not available. The caller can also be referred to someone else or offered the option of being transferred to the individual's voice mailbox.
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RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is the responsibility of the supervisor in each organization throughout the Center to ensure live telephone coverage during normal business hours. This will require establishing schedules for the coverage.
 - The supervisor may assign a liaison, such as the lead support person in each division, to arrange schedules for telephone coverage. In the event the lead support staff person is out of the office, there should be an established alternative assignment schedule for telephone coverage.
 - CDER managers must encourage the cooperation of all staff members and make sure the person answering the telephone is aware of the staff members' schedules, so that person can properly screen the telephone calls.
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EFFECTIVE DATE

This MAPP is effective upon date of publication.