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*Release Date 04.04.2024*

# Standard Operating Procedure for Help Desk and Call Center

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Food and Supplies Department  
Government of West Bengal

## INTRODUCTION

Food & Supplies Department is one of the most important Departments of the Government of West Bengal and is implementing Khadyasathi scheme of Public Distribution System to ensure food security to the poor people. The main function of the 'Department' is to ensure procurement of paddy and wheat, supply chain management and delivery of food grains to the eligible beneficiaries at the FPS level in a transparent and accountable manner.

To fulfill its commitment towards providing better Public Services to the citizens, the Government of West Bengal has emphasized on use of smart governance practices by leveraging the benefits of latest Information and Communication Technologies systems to enable responsive, transparent and efficient delivery mechanism for various public services and benefits.

Various initiatives to establish digital interactions between the Government and its citizens, employees, other stakeholders and agencies and undertake various process reforms leveraging the benefits of ICT projects have been conceived, nurtured and promoted by the State Government.

The call center has been established to provide support to the beneficiaries and general public on various queries, receive feedback and grievances or complains related with entire operation of the Food & Supplies department related with sale of paddy at MSP, Ration Card related matters, timely delivery of entitled quantity of good quality foodgrains to the beneficiaries. The Food & Supplies Department, through operating this call centre is getting direct feedback from the public on various services provided by the Department. The department analyses these feedback, grievances and complains and uses as one of the important input and source while formulating the guidelines, systems, process and policies of the Department to provide a smooth, user-friendly, transparent and accountable functioning and a pleasant experience for the beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

## **“HELPDESK – CUM – CALLCENTRE”**

The Food and Supplies Department, Government of West Bengal is running a Call Centre (12x7 helpline) in Department. The Call Centre (hereinafter called 12x7 Food Helpdesk) operates from 8.00 AM to 8.00 PM for all 7 days in a week.

The HelpDesk has three toll free numbers - **1967** and **18003455505** and **14445** (ONORC). The ownership of these toll free numbers is with the Food & Supplies Department.

The Helpline has Phone-in facilities & SMS / Internet integration. Incoming calls to the Helpline is toll free.

### **A. The functions, role and responsibilities of the HelpDesk:**

- i. Receiving calls from the public,
- ii. Registering their complaints / grievances in the portal,
- iii. Providing response to queries and citizen centric information related to Public Distribution System in West Bengal. Areas covered are eligibility of a citizen for getting a rations card, ration card related services, MSP and paddy procurement related services, registration a farmer to sell the paddy, limit of paddy, matters related with FPS License, Operation of FPS, behavior of FPS Licensee, matters related with quality and quantity of foodgrains, delivery in Duare Ration Mode, etc.
- iv. Disposal of complaints,
- v. recording the feedback received from the caller
- vi. analysis of the queries, feedback and grievances received from the caller
- vii. To act as a vibrant and responsive connect and provide a bridge for understanding and exchange of information between the Food and Supplies Department and citizens & other stakeholders.
- viii. To establish better feedback mechanism to facilitate better management of PDS, Ration Card related matters and procurement activities.
- ix. To escalate the grievances to the higher authorities
- x. To communicate the status of the grievance redressal to the citizen once the issue is resolved.

### **B. Manpower at HelpDesk :**

The call centre has a well-trained and dedicated manpower and robust technical solutions required for running the “12x7 Food Helpdesk”. Adequate persons have been deployed for attending phone calls with the knowledge of different languages viz. Bengali, English and Hindi. There are fifteen (15) seats and twenty four (24) operators.

- From 8:00 am to 2:00 pm 9 operators are operating the Call Centre.
- From 11:00 am to 5:00 pm 15 operators are operating the Call Centre.
- From 2:00 am to 8:00 pm 9 operators are operating the Call Centre.

Number of seats vis-a-vis Operators are increased/decreased depending on the volume of calls received or any special situation. If number of seat and/or operator is increased / decreased, payment of the Agency is made after enhancing / deducting the amount @ unit rate of seats and/or manpower.

### **C. Features of the HelpDesk :**

The system has a capacity of handling multiple calls during peak time per day. The call centre have all the latest features like call routing as per the skills, call recording for future requirement and quality monitoring, call barging Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) with dynamic queuing. IVR with intelligent routing, integration with database, call back scheduling, rule based dialing, etc. The Call Centre Operator's have excellent knowledge of various dialects of the respective Local Language as per scope and communication skills so that the Operator can communicate and understand the queries of people easily. The Department has the right to evaluate the Call Centre Operators at any stage and can release them in case they are not found suitable. Under such circumstances, the Service Provider have to replace the Call Centre Operators within one week.

The Call Centre is capable of receiving queries / complaints of all descriptions from the citizens / Dealer / Distributors / Government functionaries over telephone. High Speed Internet Connectivity has been provided as per requirement.

The complainant may call from a mobile phone or land line alike. Caller Identification System facilities has been provided for registering the number of the caller in the software. The identity of each caller is validated and registered by making query from the operators attending the call centre; each and every validated query /complaint is registered in the application software.

Action to satisfy the query or to attend to the complaint is initiated immediately on receipt of the query / complaint, irrespective of the day of the week or the hour of complaint, by escalating the issue at the appropriate level in accordance with the protocol specified by the Food and Supplies Department.

Information on the action taken on each query / complaint is thereafter

incorporated in the application software so that it is visible in the website on real time basis. Password protected access to the helpline website has been provided to the Administrators in the Food and Supplies Department and to selected users as specified by the said Department, so that status of resolution of any query / complaint can be directly uploaded by them. Periodic reports on the problems resolved and remaining unresolved is generated in the formats prescribed, posted in the website and transmitted electronically to the specified functionaries of the Food and Supplies Department.

#### **D. FACILITIES & EQUIPMENTS OF CALL CENTRE:**

- i. Desktop PCs with dialing facilities for incoming & outgoing for each seat.
- ii. Secured Server space / Web spaces storage to save the captured data and local server for dialing facility.
- iii. Software required–Web based CRM software, dialing software.
- iv. Local Area Network.
- v. Appropriate no. of terminals from tele-service provider's connection to the local server.
- vi. Required no. of telephone instruments of appropriate technology.
- vii. Call transfer Facility on Telephone sets.
- viii. Good Quality Headphones for each operator.
- ix. IVRS.
- x. PRI cards & Modems

#### **E. FEATURES OF SOFTWARE :**

- i. A dedicated server / web space with appropriate configuration is provided for installation of the Software used for processing the Queries / Complaints received at the Helpline and the each Helpdesk operators & officers / users have been provided with a PC / Laptop linked to the server.
- ii. The software provided for the Helpline is fully web enabled, enabling citizens to lodge complaints / raise queries and view status of complaint resolution by accessing the application from the internet. The State and District Level officials of the Food and Supplies Department have access to the web site for updating the status of complaint escalated to them. The Software is capable of accepting Value Added Services like Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and SMS (Short Messaging Service) Based Applications for registering requests and disseminating information.

- iii. The software have features for voice recording of all complaints / quarries received through the Helpline, and action taken in each case, in consultation with the Department and modify it to suit the requirements of the Department as and when required.
- iv. The Agency will hand over the source code and updated database to the Department on expiry of the contract or termination of the contact, and Knowledge Transfer incidental to such handover will also be arranged during the last 3 months of the contract within 1 month from the date of notice of termination of contract in case of pre-mature termination of contract. Then the Agency will also handed over the installer, Database installation guideline, procedure to modify the software, the agreement with the producer of the software for maintenance contract to the Food and Supplies Department 3 months before the termination of contract in case of normal termination or within 1 month from the date of notice of termination of contract in case of pre-mature termination of contract.
- v. The software is developed along with integration of the Helpline Portal and the official website of the Department. The website developed for the 12x7 Food Helpdesk is security compliant in consonance with the Information Technology Act, 2000 and have a trust worthy access-control technology and authorization policy, with inbuilt security features. Third Party Security Audit of the developed Web Portal has been arranged through any recognized Agency like STQC at its own cost.

#### **F. SERVICES & SUPPORT BY TELE SERVICE PROVIDER:**

- i. The telephone line of the Helpdesk is linked / mapped with a pre-defined number i.e. 033-2252-9893 for which tie-up with BSNL is provided. Hunting facility is inbuilt so that at any point of time, an incoming call can land on one of the free lines (1967 / 1800-345-5505 / 14445). The configuration of the number is such that it is easy to remember.
- ii. It is always ensured that the same telephone number (033-2252-9893) is displayed as Caller Line Identification (CLI) in respect of all outgoing calls originating from any of the terminals of the Helpdesk to facilitate easy recognition by the Food Officials.

#### **G. QUALITY OF OPERATORS:**

The manpower deployed to receive and make calls at the call centre should posses and demonstrate the following skill sets and qualities at all times and while attending the calls and responding to the caller :

- i. Good Communication Skills.
- ii. Excellent command over Bengali language and ordinary English and Hindi language.
- iii. Problem solving skill and attitude.

- iv. Receiving calls with proper welcoming note.
- v. Voice should be clear, soft with proper diction.
- vi. Use the language in which the caller is comfortable.
- vii. No arguments.
- viii. Follow departmental FAQs.**
- ix. Follow the call forwarding process [both for voice process and helpdesk].
- x. Minimum Educational Qualification of 12<sup>th</sup> Class. List of IT personnel having experience in working in analogous position and possessing adequate technical background have given additional weightage.
- xi. The Supervisors should have a better understanding of the scheme guidelines, experience in people management and good communication skills. Capable of handling different situations and be able to handle the query/issues arising during the calls to the satisfaction of the callers.
- xii. Priority assigned to the request.
- xiii. Follow up pending request with department.
- xiv. Pending request for more than 7 days should have proper feedback records.
- xv. Working independently after training and assistance.
- xvi. Follow the roster provided.
- xvii. Any changes in duty timing will be subjected to prior notice.

#### **H. SERVICE CONDITIONS OF OPERATOR:**

1. Operator shall perform his / her duties as per the roster provided and maintain the seat numbers.
2. Mark daily attendance through Biometric System.
3. One paid leave is provided to every operator per month which is preplanned and it is replaceable by other.
4. Every operator will have 9 government holidays on Republic Day, Saraswati Puja, Holi, Independence Day, Durgapuja Ashtami, Laxmi puja, Kalipuja and Christmas.
5. If the operator needs more than one leave then it is arranged either by exchange or by paid replacement.
6. **Daily call report** shall be collected at the end of the day for efficiency checkup by the Supervising Officer of the System Integrator or Assistant HelpDesk Nodal Officer.
7. **5 recorded calls of all the Operators shall be analyzed monthly by each of the Nodal Officers in charge of the HelpDesk and a report be submitted to Joint Secretary/ Special Secretary in charge of the HelpDesk.**

## **REVIEW & MONTORING OF HELPDESK**

### **I. Duties and Responsibilities of Agency:**

1. The agency shall provide only eligible and competent Operators and Team Lead. Operators who are not fulfilling the eligibility criteria or not performing to the desired level of performance shall be replaced immediately.
2. The agency shall provide and maintain all requisite computer hardware, equipment, printers, scanners, software as per specifications and in quantity. In case of any malfunction or breakdown they shall be replaced immediately.
3. The agency shall provide training to all the operators and Team Lead monthly.
4. Prepare the category wise list of issues raised, answer given and matter unresolved with ground and submit it to the Inspecting Officials on daily basis.
5. Submit grievance disposal report every week to the Inspecting Officials.
6. Submit biometric attendance report at the end of every month to the Nodal Officers of Helpdesk.

### **J. Duties and Responsibilities of Operators :**

1. Punctuality is the essence of the service. Operator shall arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the shift and shall occupy his / her seat in time. Operator shall perform his / her duties as per the roster provided and maintain the seat numbers.
2. Mark daily attendance through Biometric System.
3. Operator shall promptly receive the calls, record the call details and provide the response also instantaneously along with raising a ticket web software.
4. Operator shall be courteous and patient in replying the caller.
5. In case of any grievances, operators shall register the grievance received through Helpdesk and assign those to the concerned authority.
6. In case of queries for which information is not available at their end, they will forward the call to the Inspecting Official for their assistance. If any issue needs intervention of higher authority, Inspecting Official will forward the call to the Nodal Officers of Directorate.
7. Operator shall prepare the category wise list of issues raised, answer given and matter unresolved with ground and submit it to the Inspecting Officials on daily basis through the team lead.



## **K. Role of Inspecting Officials (Assistant HelpDesk Nodal Officer):**

1. Attend the Call Centre regularly as per their schedule. They exchange issues, if any, between 1 PM to 03:30 PM for the sake of smooth transition among themselves.
2. Ensure the presence of operators in each shift as per prescribed strength. (8:00 am to 2:00 pm- 9 operators, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm-15operators, 2:00 am to 8:00 pm- 9 operators) or as may be increased or decreased.
3. They will monitor the quality of call handling, replies given and act as **liaison officer between the Operators, the Nodal Officers of Helpdesk and Supervising Officer of Helpdesk.**
4. For any queries for which information is not available at the end of Operators, call is forwarded to them and they shall provide information or collect information from Nodal Officers of Helpdesk or Directorate or Cells. **Preferred mode of exchange of information is email.**
5. Collect category wise list of issues raised, answer given and matter unresolved with ground on daily basis and submit it to the Helpdesk Nodal Officers for further examination, analysis and compilation.
6. Acquaint themselves from various orders, SOPs, guidelines and control orders, update FAQ accordingly and brief the Operators on weekly basis about such provisions.
7. Submit weekly report on grievance disposal to the Helpdesk Nodal Officers.

## **L. Role of HelpDesk Nodal Officers :**

1. Two Help Desk Nodal Officers are assigned to the Call Centre and they shall remain present at the Call Centre as per scheduled shift to monitor its functioning carefully.
2. Call may be forwarded to them on the issues for which answer is not available at the end of operators & Inspecting Officials. If answer is available at their end, it will be provided else they will collect information from the concerned officials of the Directorate or the Cells in the Department and inform the operators through Inspecting Officials who will update the caller accordingly.
3. They shall interact with the Operators, Shift Lead, Assistant HelpDesk Nodal Officer frequently.
4. They shall also listen to the response being given by an operator to a caller and give a feedback to him / her appreciating if the response was good or advise to improve it further.
5. Collect weekly report of call analysis as well as weekly report of grievance

disposal from the Assistant HelpDesk Nodal Officers of the Helpdesk. On analysis of pending grievances the same has to be disposed within 3 days or take it up with the higher authorities.

6. Acquaint themselves from various orders, SOPs, guidelines and control orders, update FAQ accordingly and brief the Operators on weekly basis about such provisions.
7. Update the FAQ versions every month and make it available to the operators under their signatures on 1<sup>st</sup> day of every month. They will attend the weekly VCs for remaining updated.
8. They shall prepare and develop knowledge management system and get it approved by **Joint Secretary/ Special Secretary in charge of the HelpDesk. The knowledge based system is FAQs and standard responses to various problems.** This is required to improve the quality and promptness of responses to the callers.
9. **They shall prepare a short note every week and send to the DDPS, DR every week with a copy to the Nodal Officers of the concerned Directorates and Cells. This weekly note shall identify the nature of issues, stakeholder involved, type of queries & problems coming up in the HelpDesk and analyse them whether they are procedural, portal technical issues related, officer or Dealer related, policy or Control order related, causing difficulties in the field to the public or officers.**
10. Inform immediately Joint Secretary/ Special Secretary in charge of the HelpDesk whenever there is any transfer or superannuation of the Assistant HelpDesk Nodal Officers or HelpDesk Nodal Officers so that necessary arrangement for replacement is made.

#### **M. Duties and Responsibilities of Nodal Officers of grievance for various cells of Secretariat:**

1. The Cell Nodal Officers will ensure disposal of pending grievances related to their cell within 3 days. If it takes more time, they shall appraise the cell-in-charge of the concerned cell to get it redressed.
2. They will examine the Weekly Note of **HelpDesk Nodal Officers** and put up for further action to the Cell in charge.

#### **N. Role of Nodal Officer of Directorates:**

1. Visit Call Centre every day for at least 1-2 hour to check call quality and functioning of the Call Centre. This visit shall be in the morning when the shift starts or till the closure of the Shift in the evening or any other time. But visiting once in the morning at 8 AM and once in the evening between 6-8 PM every week is mandatory.
2. They shall interact with the Operators, Shift Lead, Assistant HelpDesk

Nodal Officer and HelpDesk Nodal Officer.

3. They shall also listen to the response being given by an operator to a caller and give a feedback to him appreciating if the response was good or advise to improve it further.
4. He will jot down the category wise issues based on call analysis report of Nodal Officers of Helpdesk which need intervention of various cells of Department and take up the issues with the OSDs of concerned cell for necessary updation / modification and submit it before the Supervising Officer.
5. Monitor the pending grievances of the Directorate & different Cells of the Department for disposal within 7 days. He / She will review the grievance disposal with Nodal Officers of the various cells and Directorate once in a week.
6. Inform immediately Director whenever there is any transfer or superannuation of the Nodal Officers of the Directorate so that necessary arrangement for replacement is made and assignment order is issued.

#### **O. Duties and Responsibilities of Assistant Supervising Officer:**

1. Visit Call Centre at least 2-3 times in a week for checking quality and functioning of the Call Centre and giving a feedback to the Supervising Officer HelpDesk.
2. Responsible for updating FAQ in regular interval and necessary training.
3. He / She will analyse the nature & category of grievances in four (4) categories, functioning of field official, procurement policy related matter, distribution & engagement of FPS dealers & distribution policy related matter and technical & computer related matter once in every week and send the sorted grievance matters to the DDP&S / DR, Procurement Cell, Food Cell, ITR Cell respectively to take care of the issues and modify the policy / system as per requirement.
4. He / She shall **update the Standard Operating Procedures for HelpDesk and Call Center every Quarter** and issue updated version with approval of Supervising Officer.