

# CUSTOMER CARE POLICY



**MUNISIPALITEIT  
RICHTERSVELD  
MUNICIPALITY**

## **CUSTOMER CARE POLICY AND STANDARDS**

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# PUTTING THE CUSTOMER FIRST

## 1. Aim

The Richtersveld Municipality aims to provide consistent service excellence whenever customers make contact with the municipality. This aim incorporates the Municipality's commitment to ensuring the human rights principles set out in the South African Constitution, the eight Batho Pele principles aimed at transforming public service, and 'getting it right the first time.'

## 2. Values

The Richtersveld Municipality will continually remind its staff of the core values that should guide all interaction with customers, including:

- Efficiency
- Professionalism
- Commitment and respect
- Integrity, morality and transparency
- Innovation
- Equity and fairness
- Compassion and dignity

## 3. Batho Pele & the Code of Conduct for Municipal staff members

Batho Pele means "People First" and the eight principles set out in it are the foundation of national Government's approach to guide all interaction between Government institutions and its public:

1. **Access:** Equitable access to integrated service delivery.
2. **Openness and Transparency:** Creating a culture of collaboration.
3. **Consultation:** Listening to the needs and problems of citizens.
4. **Redress:** Apologising when necessary and finding speedy solutions when possible.
5. **Courtesy:** Services offered with courtesy and consideration.
6. **Service Standards:** Anticipating needs and informing citizens of the level and quality of service they can expect.
7. **Information:** Complete, accurate information about the municipality and its services.
8. **Value for Money:** Delivering solutions economically and efficiently.

This approach is strengthened by the values underpinned in Schedule 2 of the Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000; the Code of Conduct for municipal staff members.

#### **4. Customers definition**

In the past the municipality has referred to the people it deals with as 'ratepayers' or 'consumers'. This perception may have created a mindset that only taxpayers, who essentially purchased essential services, were being served by the municipality. Since this is only half true, the notion had to be broadened to include everyone who interacts with the municipality and that they are in fact all **customers** who should be treated accordingly.

The municipality aims to emphasise the message that its customers are all the people it deals with in the performing of its work. These include the people who live, work and play in the greater Richtersveld Municipal Area as well as everyone the municipality does business with. In this sense there are external and internal customers, and the same standards must apply when working with colleagues (internal customers) than with people outside the organisation.

#### **5. Customer Care definition and importance**

Customer Care in this context refers to this municipality's commitment to make the customer's contact with the municipality convenient and positive. The manner in which this is done is incorporated in the aim, values and Batho Pele principles communicated earlier in this document.

In practice, good Customer Care includes:

- A customer must be able to contact the municipality easily, reaching the correct department to handle its request or enquiry.
- A customer should have welcoming access to municipal buildings where adequate signage has been provided. Where practicable, access for the disabled should be provided. Incorporation of private areas for customers to discuss personal or sensitive matters should be considered where relevant and suitable.
- A customer should be assisted in their language of preference in accordance with the municipality's Language Policy (English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa).
- A municipal member of staff should identify himself by name when communicating with a customer, listen attentively and respond appropriately.
- Providing customers with relevant, accurate and up-to-date information, including an explanation when a service is not available.
- Once a complaint, request or enquiry has been received, prompt action should be taken and a clear response should be given to the customer within the period stated in the Richtersveld Municipality Customer Service Charter (**Annexure A**).
- In the case of on-going or long-term problems, a customer should be kept informed of any anticipated delays and progress reported regularly on the way forward in addressing the complaints, requests or enquiries.
- In case of dissatisfaction, a customer should be explained the procedure for lodging a complaint, including relevant contact details.
- Training municipal staff to enable better service, increased awareness and understanding of values in this document.
- Actively and regularly seeking comments on service delivery with the purpose of on-going development and improvement.

- Recognising staff who are exceptional in achieving service standards and who go beyond the call of duty for the customer.

Service Standards are important to ensure:

- That all customers, whether they are residents or visitors, or do business with municipality, will receive uniform, consistent high standards of customer care in all departments within the municipality.
- That customer needs are addressed during the planning and delivery of all Council services, and incorporated in all relevant policies and procedures.
- That municipal staff are always reminded of their responsibility to put the Customer First and what this means in practical terms.
- That Council eliminate wastage by providing services “Right the First Time”.

## **6. Measuring success**

This Customer Care Policy is supported by the attached Customer Service Charter (Annexure A); which includes Service Standards that will define deliverables for each service delivery unit and will serve as the municipality’s promise of delivery to customers.

Performance will be measured via continuous monitoring, benchmarking against similar organisations, and being subject to regular Performance Audits.

Via its Customer Relations Department, the municipality will develop methods of receiving customer feedback to determine levels of customer satisfaction in terms of standard of service received. Methods for this purpose include:

- Regular customer satisfaction questionnaires and post-transaction telephone follow-up.
- A “mystery shopper”-type programme in which members of the public are asked to do business in different departments to evaluate and score services objectively.
- Annual focus group sessions, performed by the Customer Relations Department, to determine possible gaps that may exist between customer perceptions of municipal service delivery and what the municipality thinks it is achieving.
- Actively publicising and advertising in municipal buildings a Customer Care SMS Help Line and email address where customers can report good or poor service, or provide feedback and suggestions.
- Placing of ‘feedback book’ in strategic places to facilitate Customer Care-related feedback.
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These monitoring methods will assist the municipality in developing programmes that will address any shortcomings in the standard of service.

## **7. Service Standards**

Service Standards are specific, service-oriented actions incorporated in the Customer Service Charter as a means to continually measure and improve service to its customers. At its core, the Standards aim to manage queries and complaints across all departments in a timeous, efficient and effective manner – incorporating the Customer Care principles discussed above.

Service Standards are designed to:

- Be measurable, with set performance targets which can be reviewed
- Stipulate the exact manner in which staff should behave in dealing with customers
- Incorporate training that would ensure that staff understand completely what is expected of them in terms of Customer Care Service Standards, and the way in which the municipality will manage them, will be set out in the following document:
- Richtersveld Municipality Customer Care Policy incorporating the Customer Service Charter, which includes the Service Standards.

## **8. Practical implications**

It is anticipated that the Richtersveld Municipality's new customer-orientated approach may have some practical challenges for the municipality as an organisation and may require re-evaluation of certain municipal processes to ensure service standards.

- Very section of the municipality will have its own Service Standards, which will be supported by a set of performance measurement controls that, if complied to, will result in good service standards.
- Compliance with or adherence to the Customer Care Service Standards must be reflected as a Key Performance Indicator on each responsible official's performance plan.
- Processes will be regularly evaluated in all departments to ensure best practices regarding Customer Care and placing the Customer First.
- A performance system will be implemented to recognise staff, sections and departments who are exceptional in achieving service standards and who go beyond the call of duty for the customer.
- Staff will be trained to record and communicate feedback from customers – no matter whether the feedback directly relates to the department where it was reported or not – so that problems can be dealt with speedily and without sending customers to and fro. Feedback may also be incorporated in procedures and processes related to Customer Care and service delivery.

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## **9. Customer Care Commitment**

The Customer Care Commitment is a statement, worded below, that will be used in different forms of communication to reaffirm the municipality's commitment to service excellence and Customer Care:

The Richtersveld Municipality Customer Care Policy, incorporating the Customer Care Charter, demonstrates the municipality's commitment to render quality services to its customers.

The municipality values comments and observations regarding Customer Care and encourages customers to provide feedback through the below-mentioned channels to ensure on-going service excellence.

- Customers can report comments, complaints, compliments and queries regarding municipal services at any service counter of the Richtersveld Municipality.
- Customers should request the municipal official to record the feedback on the electronic Customer Care system, and ask for a reference number, which will be automatically generated when the comment has been recorded.
- Customers are requested to ensure that their name, surname, contact details and the essence of the complaint are provided when providing feedback.
- Should a situation not be resolved through normal service channels, customers can report the matter to the municipality's Customer Relations Department on the contact details provided below. A complaint can also be posted in the book marked "Customer Relations" provided at the reception desk of the Richtersveld Municipality Corporate Building in Clyde Street.
- The Richtersveld Municipality would also like to recognise employees who go beyond the call of duty. Customers are asked to report exceptionally good service to the Customer Relations Department. Please ensure that the relevant staff member's name, surname and department are correctly mentioned in such instance.

Municipal Manager  
Richtersveld Municipality  
Private Bag X113  
Port Nolloth  
8280

Customer Care Unit  
Telephone: 027 851 1121  
E-mail: [melvyn@richtersveld.gov.za](mailto:melvyn@richtersveld.gov.za) (this should be customer@)

## ANNEXURE “A”

### CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

#### **Vision**

*Richtersveld Municipality – We should continuously strive to develop all the resources of the Richtersveld, including its natural, cultural and human resource, in a manner that is sustainable and benefits the people of the region so that our future will be secure*

#### **Message from the Executive Mayor**

The Richtersveld Municipality Customer Care Policy, incorporating this Customer Service Charter, sets out Council’s commitment towards service excellence. Underlined by the eight Batho Pele principles that national government prescribes as the core of service delivery for all levels of government, this document intends putting People First and has at its heart government’s vision of ‘Creating a better life for all’.

This municipality considers everyone who lives, works and plays in the Greater Richtersveld Municipal Area as customers. We want to ensure that you understand your rights and responsibilities, receive the services you are entitled to, and have the opportunity for feedback. We believe that the Customer Care Policy and Service Charter is a progressive step towards achieving such goals.

#### **Message from the Municipal Manager**

In July 2016 the Richtersveld Municipality established a new Communications and Customer Relations Department to address issues surrounding service delivery and related communication. The Department reports to my office and therefore serves as a direct line of communication between the customer and myself.

In this Customer Service Charter every department within the municipality has been assigned specific Service Standards according to the services it provides, and will be measured accordingly.

I believe that this department, this document and its related processes signify a new approach to customer service within the municipality and will go far in affirming the values we have always believed in: transparency, accountability and service excellence.

This document also signifies a relationship in which the customer has responsibility to pay timeously for the services he expects to be delivered, and reports issues and problems as soon as they occur. The municipality and its people remain in partnership which has a better chance of success when everyone is working together.

#### **Greater Richtersveld at a glance**

Richtersveld Municipality is the north-westernmost local municipality in the Northern Cape. Its coastline is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and Namibia. The geographical area consists of approximately 9608 km<sup>2</sup>. This chapter will provide information and statistics on the municipal area of Richtersveld. It includes demographic details,



development levels, service delivery levels and other socio-economic factors pertinent to the area

## **Governance**

Our organisational structure comprises of the following directorates:

### **Directorate: Municipal Manager**

The Municipal Manager is the Accounting Officer of the Richtersveld Municipality. His directorate is also responsible for Integrated Development Planning (IDP); Economic Development (ED)

### **Directorate: Corporate Services**

This directorate is responsible for Legal Services; Administration; Committee Services; Human Resources; Public Participation; Property; and Records Management. Corporate Services is also the secretariat of Council and supports the legislative and executive functions of Council; Integrated Human Settlements; Information Technology; Disaster Management; Traffic and Licensing; Safety and Security; Cleansing; Libraries; Arts, Culture and Heritage;; and Youth and Gender programmes.

### **Directorate: Financial Services**

This directorate is divided into four sections: Income; Expenditure and the Budget Office.

### **Directorate: Infrastructure Services**

This directorate is responsible for provision and maintenance of infrastructure with departments Public Works; and Water and Sewerage; Electricity; Fire and Rescue; Solid Waste; Cemeteries; Parks and Horticulture; Sports and Recreation; Town Planning and Building Control; Environmental Management.

## **Customers**

Customers are all the people it deals with in the performing of its work. These include the people who live, work and play in the greater Richtersveld Municipal Area as well as everyone the municipality does business with.

## **SERVICE STANDARDS**

Designed to measure Customer Care services, the Richtersveld Municipality has developed the following set of Service Standards for every department within the municipality.

### **General**

#### **Telephone calls**

- Municipal staff will answer telephone calls within five ringtones whenever possible.

### **All Departments**

#### **Written and e-mail enquiries**

- Acknowledge receipt by letter or email within five (5) working days of receipt, or immediately after inquiry has been recorded via SMS service.
- Enquiry answered, or feedback provided if problem not resolved, within ten (10) working days of receipt, or immediately after inquiry has been resolved, via SMS service.

#### **Telephonic enquiries**

- Enquiry answered, or feedback provided if problem not resolved, within ten (10) working days of phone call, or immediately after inquiry has been recorded, via SMS service.

#### **Walk-in enquiries**

- Answered within ten (10) working days, or feedback provided if not resolved.

### **Directorate Financial Services**

#### **Account enquiries**

- Feedback provided within ten (10) working days.
- If applicable, corrections made before the next practicable account run.

#### **Distribution of accounts**

- **Monthly before the tenth day of each month.**

### **Directorate Infrastructure Services**

#### **Electrical**

#### **Repair unforeseen power outages (electrical faults, malfunctioning equipment, etc.)**

- 30% of cases within 2 hours.
- 60% of cases within 3,5 hours.
- 90% of cases within 8 hours.
- 100% of cases within 24 hours.

**Scheduled power outages (for upgrading, maintenance):**

A maximum of three (3) planned and six (6) forced outages per year, limited to a total of twelve (12) hours per outage. Richtersveld Municipality endeavours to give at least 14 days' notice of scheduled power outages by means of notice boards, advertisements, SMS, Facebook, and the municipality's website.

*Please note that Richtersveld Municipality has no control over Eskom's scheduled or unforeseen power outages but will where possible strive to keep consumers informed.*

**Applications for electrical new connections, reconnections, upgrades and changes can be submitted during office hours at the Customer Pay Centre in Main Street, Port Nolloth. Applications will be dealt with as follows:**

- Standard reconnections – two (2) days.
- Provision of standard connections – within fourteen (14) days after payment and if the building is ready and the necessary documentation is completed (e.g. Electrical Commencement Form, COC and Building Final has been submitted).
- Provision of non-standard connections – Quotation basis of twenty-one (21) days, negotiable subject to delivery times of equipment from suppliers to municipality.

**Reports of faulty street lighting, area, and sports field lighting will be dealt with as follows:**

- 95% of cases within seven (7) days.
- 100% of cases within ten (10) days.
- Faulty street lighting will only be attended to after hours if the area affected is relatively large.

**Building plans**

- **Acknowledgement of receipt within 4 hours of receipt.**
- Processing of plans smaller than 500m<sup>2</sup> within 30 days of receipt.
- Processing of plans larger than 500m<sup>2</sup> within 60 days of receipt.
- Inspection of complaints within 5 days of receipt.
- Issuing of completion certificates within 10 days of receipt of request.

**Applications for land use**

- Comments provided to applicant within 14 days after closing date stipulated in advertisement.
- Acknowledgement of receipt and confirmation of completeness of application within 14 days of receipt.
- Decision or submission to planning tribunal within 30 days after receipt of response to comments.
- Notification of decision within 14 days of delegated decision or issue of relevant planning tribunal minutes.
- Processing time no more than 90 days (excluding advertising time and time waiting for response to comments or additional input) from receipt of application.
- Inspection of complaints within 5 days of receipt.

**Repair of potholes in streets**

- Done according to a scheduled programme (60 days).

**Grading of gravel streets**

- Done according to a scheduled programme (180 days). (subject to plant being procured)

**Water supply repairs**

- Reaction within three (3) hours after the incident was reported.
- Repaired within two (2) days of emergency action taken, (subject to procurement processes).

**New household water connections**

- Within fourteen (14) days of receipt of payment.

**Sewer blockages**

- Reaction within three (3) hours after incident was reported.
- Repaired within three (3) days of emergency action taken, (subject to procurement processes).

**New household sewer connections**

- Within fourteen (14) working days of payment.

**Draining of septic tanks**

- Within 24 hours after request was received.

**Fire & Rescue**

- Reaction time 10 to 15 minutes (in town areas) after receipt of a call.

**Other emergencies (motor vehicle accidents, crowd control, etc.)**

- Receive immediate attention.

**Mowing of grass on sports fields**

- Done according to prescheduled programme (monthly).

**Mowing of grass in public parks and open spaces**

- Done according to prescheduled programme (monthly).

**Refuse collection**

- Collected weekly according to a scheduled programme based on residential areas.

**Directorate Corporate Services****Motor registrations and licenses**

- 15 – 20 minutes per case

**Housing Application**

- Acknowledgement within 14 days of complete application form

**Land purchase**

- Response within 14 days of application

**Clearance certificate**

- Response within 10 work days

**CONTACT NUMBERS:****Richtersveld Municipality**

Telephone: 027 851 1111

E-mail: [postmaster@richtersveld.gov.za](mailto:postmaster@richtersveld.gov.za)

Website: [www.richtersveld.gov.za](http://www.richtersveld.gov.za)

**Customer Relations Unit**

Telephone: 027 851 1121

E-mail: [customer@richtersveld.gov.za](mailto:customer@richtersveld.gov.za)

**Departments:**

Municipal Manager

Telephone: 027 851 1113

Director: Corporate Services

Telephone: 027 851 1149

Director: Financial Services

Telephone: 027 851 1127

Director: Infrastructure Services

Telephone: 027 851 1125

**AUTHORITY**

**RICHTERSVELD MUNICIPALITY  
CUSTOMER CARE POLICY**

**ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

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