

**POLICY & PROCEDURE:*****Communication Protocol*  
Operational Policy****Community and Social Services Division**

**Children's Services Department  
Community Housing Department  
Finance and Special Services Department  
Ontario Works Department  
Program Review and Quality Assurance Department**

**Supporting Authority:**

**United Counties of Leeds and Grenville:  
Acceptable Usage Policy  
(Index Number: MIS6001, issue date May 29, 2003)**

**United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
Community and Social Services Division  
Statement of Beliefs and Values  
(issue date April, 2001)**

**Intent:**

To develop standardized procedures and guidelines as it pertains to communication protocol. It is acknowledged that to effectively do our jobs we are required to utilize several modes of communication on a daily basis. This policy is intended to uphold the integrity of the Division through the implementation of service standards for our staff, clients and community partners.

**Telephone Protocol**

1. All telephone calls and telephone messages that are received by the Division of Community and Social Services that require a response must be returned within a 24 hour period.
2. Staff members are responsible for making arrangements in their absence to ensure that all calls requiring a response are returned within the 24 hour period.
3. All staff that have a dedicated telephone with voice messaging capability are to ensure that both the internal and external messages of their voice mail system are updated regularly.
4. Voice mail messages are to be changed daily with the exception of when staff may anticipate their absence. In situations of planned absences, staff should modify the voice mail message to reflect this information.

### **Telephone Protocol (continued)**

5. In the case of unexpected absences, the immediate Team Leader, Supervisor, Manager or Director will make arrangements for the message to be changed.
6. All Staff must ensure that their immediate Team Leader, Supervisor, Manager, Director has the password to their voice mail account in the event of unplanned absences and keep them updated as to changes.
7. All voice mail messages shall include a minimum of the following:
  - a. Name
  - b. Position
  - c. Date
  - d. Availability
  - e. Alternate / emergency contact number or extension
8. In the event that staff believe that their conversation with a client / tenant is being recorded, extreme caution should be taken. Staff should clearly advise the client / tenant that they do not give permission for the recording of the conversation. Staff who choose to discontinue a conversation with a client / tenant because of suspicion of recording, should clearly state the reason to the individual.

### **Computer / Email**

1. Staff shall use discretion to ensure that personal emails are minimal and that common sense is utilized in the selection of who the message is distributed to. Personal, non-work related emails should have only selective distribution. Staff should familiarize themselves with the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Acceptable Usage Policy, Index Number: MIS6001, issued May 29, 2003.
2. Only those items requiring urgent response should be flagged as an urgent email.
3. All emails received by co-workers or external community agencies that require a response must be responded to within 24 hours.
4. If the staff member has a planned absence in excess of 2 days, the out-of-office assistant shall be utilized to advise incoming email of the absence and expected date of return.
5. Email addresses of staff members are not to be issued to clients / tenants / service users of any of the programs within the Division of Community and Social Services.
6. In the event that clients attempt contact by email, the staff member should promptly advise the sender that information received by this method of communication will not be acknowledged or responded to.

**Regular Mail**

1. All mail that is received shall be date stamped upon being opened. All documents received shall be date stamped, not just the envelopes that it arrives in.

**Fax**

1. All faxes sent from the Division of Community and Social Services must include a fax cover sheet to identify the sender of the information.
2. All faxes received will be distributed to the intended individual by a designated individual in each office location and date stamped.

**Monitoring**

1. All staff within the Division of Community and Social Services are expected to comply with the Policy on Communication Protocol.
2. There will be an expectation for Management staff to monitor the compliance to the Policy on Communication Protocol.

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Deborah Gill  
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Department

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Date

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Dorothy Theobald  
Director, Community and Social Services Division

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Date