

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Placing Calls on Hold

This SOP emphasizes **proper call hold etiquette** by instructing employees to place calls on hold only when absolutely necessary and to always seek the caller's permission beforehand. This practice ensures respectful communication, enhances customer experience, and maintains professionalism by minimizing wait times and keeping callers informed throughout the interaction.

Purpose

To outline the correct process for placing calls on hold, ensuring clear and courteous communication and delivering excellent customer service.

Scope

This SOP applies to all employees who handle inbound and outbound calls with customers, clients, or partners.

Procedure

1. **Determine Necessity:** Place a call on hold **only** if it is absolutely necessary (e.g., to retrieve information, consult a colleague, or handle an urgent matter).
2. **Seek Permission:** Politely ask the caller for permission before placing them on hold.
Example: "May I place you on hold for a moment while I look up that information?"
3. **Wait for Response:** Do not proceed until the caller has granted permission. If the caller objects, offer alternatives.
4. **Thank the Caller:** Thank the caller for their patience before placing them on hold.
Example: "Thank you for your patience, I'll place you on hold now."
5. **Minimize Hold Time:** Complete your task as efficiently as possible to reduce the caller's wait time.
6. **Update the Caller:** If hold duration exceeds one minute, return to the caller and provide an update. Offer the option for a callback if resolution will take longer.
7. **Resume the Call:** Thank the caller again after returning, apologize for any inconvenience, and continue addressed matters.

Quick Reminders:

- Never place a call on hold without informing and obtaining permission from the caller.
- Always acknowledge the caller's time and patience.
- Return to the call promptly.
- Provide updates if the wait is prolonged.

Review and Compliance

This SOP should be reviewed annually and as needed to ensure best practices. Non-compliance may result in retraining or disciplinary action.