



*The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Management Audit*

WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR.
Comptroller

**Audit Report on
The Effectiveness of the DOT
Customer Service Call Center
(CALLDOT)**

MH02-136A

June 14, 2002

*The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Management Audit*

**Audit of the Effectiveness of
The DOT Customer Service Call Center
(CALLDOT)**

MH02-136A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) maintains the city's streets and many of its bridges and highways and operates the Staten Island Ferry and many parking lots and garages in the City. In 1996, DOT installed an automated customer service telephone line system, CALLDOT, that offers recorded information, as well as a mechanism to make complaints and requests within DOT's service areas.

Callers hear an automated greeting that offers a menu of options to choose from. Callers can reach an operator (Call Manager) directly at any time by pressing "0." The Interactive Voice Response system (IVR), an automated component of CALLDOT through which callers obtain information, handled 52 percent of the calls received in Fiscal Year 2001. Call Managers handled the remaining 48 percent of the calls.

In conjunction with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DOITT), DOT added an Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) in February 2000. The ACD technology allowed DOT to view real-time information and obtain reports about call volume and waiting times.

After September 11, 2001, the CALLDOT Call Center moved its operations from 40 Worth Street to a temporary location in Queens. CALLDOT's 27 Call Managers share office space with the Parking Permits for People with Disabilities (PPPD) Customer Service Unit and with Traffic Operations. As of May 2002, CALLDOT was still operating from this location, where the IVR system was replaced with a call routing system that plays a four-minute recorded message. The recorded message provides a brief overview of current travel information. Following the recorded message, the system transfers the caller to a Call Manager.

Many functions that were handled automatically at CALLDOT's prior location now have to be handled manually. For example, call volume, which was formerly calculated automatically, is now calculated by adding the ticks that each Call Manager marks on a log sheet

classifying the types of calls received. The log sheets are collected every hour by a CALLDOT supervisor, who calculates the tick marks to obtain a daily total count of calls handled.

The Mayor's Office of Operations established the Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service (Citywide Standards), which include several requirements: all calls to City agencies must be answered within three rings; each agency must use a standard telephone greeting; callers are not to be kept on hold for more than two minutes; and each agency must respond to all caller inquiries within 10 working days with an acknowledgement regarding the issue.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objectives of this audit were to determine whether CALLDOT is in compliance with the Citywide Standards and to determine whether it is providing accurate and useful information to callers.

The scope of our audit was September 2001 through March 2002. To accomplish our objectives, we interviewed DOT officials and reviewed their policies and procedures and the Citywide Standards. We made a series of telephone calls to CALLDOT requesting transportation information, to determine whether the Citywide Standards were being met and whether the information provided was accurate.

We reviewed and analyzed CALLDOT tracking reports of callbacks for five randomly sampled days in January 2002. We reviewed CALLDOT's Monthly Call Volume reports for Fiscal Year 2001. We reviewed CALLDOT's current call-routing telephone system and manual processes at its Queens location. We observed three Call Managers as they answered customer telephone calls and noted, among other things, whether the Call Managers answered with the proper greeting, whether the call was transferred, and whether the Call Manager gave a referral telephone number.

We checked various telephone numbers listed in DOT's *Yellow Pages—A Comprehensive Directory of DOT and other Transportation-Related Services* (Yellow Pages), used by Call Managers for transportation inquiries. We reviewed the training manuals and the amount of training received by each of the Call Managers.

This audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and included tests of the records and other auditing procedures considered necessary. This audit was performed in accordance with the New York City Comptroller's audit and responsibilities as set forth in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter.

Results in Brief

Overall, CALLDOT complies with the Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service set forth by the Mayor's Office of Operations and provides useful information to its customers. Furthermore, the Call Managers are courteous and friendly, and handle calls in a professional and efficient manner. CALLDOT staff answered 100 (99%) out of 101 telephone calls within three rings, met the two-minute hold-time standard 97 (96%) out of 101 times, and called 150 (91.5%) of 164 callers back about the status of their complaints.

CALLDOT also promptly mailed accurate and useful information when requested to do so; for example, CALLDOT mailed Alternate Side Parking Regulations Calendars to 91.7% of the callers who requested them.

However, we found some weaknesses that affect CALLDOT's ability to provide the best possible service.

- When Call Managers did not know the answer to our questions regarding municipal parking lots, private ferry and bus services, and travel updates due to bridge construction projects, they failed to provide an answer to our question or to provide a referral telephone number seven (7%) out of 95 times. Moreover, the telephone referral numbers Call Managers provided were incorrect 10 (22%) out of 45 times.

We checked the telephone numbers listed in the DOT Yellow Pages for the eight information categories for which we requested specific information. The correct telephone numbers were listed for only four categories. The Yellow Pages listed no telephone number for three categories and an incorrect telephone number was listed for one category. Each Call Manager's copy of the Yellow Pages is manually updated when there is a telephone number change. This results in crossed-out numbers and handwritten notes. DOT needs to consider a more efficient way of updating telephone numbers.

In addition, CALLDOT is not always immediately notified by other DOT units of changes and updates to such DOT-related information as street closures, bridge repairs, limitations on turning on certain streets, and lane closures. Updated information is received sporadically. To compensate for this lack of communication, CALLDOT uses data gathered from outside DOT, such as newspaper articles, like "Gridlock Sam" in the Daily News.

- Call Managers failed to transfer callers directly to the referred telephone number 41 (91%) out of 45 times, as required by CALLDOT. According to the CALLDOT Director, DOT management wants callers to dial as few telephone numbers as possible to obtain information. Therefore, it is CALLDOT's unwritten policy to attempt to transfer the caller directly to the referred telephone number. We found that not all Call Managers are aware of this policy.

- Calls were either disconnected or never connected to a Call Manager four (4%) of 101 times. One reason for the disconnected calls could be that the phone system currently used by CALLDOT at the Queens location is limited in its ability to handle a large number of calls. The call routing system can only hold 25 callers in the queue. In addition, CALLDOT's Queens location does not have an ACD system that can provide CALLDOT with diagnostic reports that show the frequency of disconnected calls experienced by the public.
- Call Managers failed to provide their names when greeting the caller 16 (27%) out of 60 times.¹ In accordance with the Citywide Standards, Call Managers are required to use a standard telephone greeting when answering calls from the public.

Recommendations

The audit resulted in six recommendations. The following is a list of the major recommendations.

DOT should:

- Update the DOT Yellow Pages more frequently. DOT should also evaluate the possibility of using an automated database with search capabilities to store referral phone numbers and to replace the hard-copy Yellow Pages.
- Develop a better system of communicating between DOT unit heads and CALLDOT that will ensure that new and updated transportation information is regularly and promptly sent to CALLDOT.
- Continue to request that the Mayor's Office of Operations allow CALLDOT to return to its Manhattan office location, where it has an ACD system. If the return to the Manhattan Office is delayed beyond a reasonable time, DOT should install its ACD system at the Queens location.

DOT Response

The matters covered in this report were discussed with officials from the Department of Transportation during and at the conclusion of this audit. A preliminary draft report was sent to DOT officials and discussed at an exit conference on May 17, 2002. On May 22, 2002 we submitted a draft report to DOT officials with a request for comments. We received a written response from DOT on June 6, 2002.

DOT agreed with the audit's findings and recommendations, and also stated:

¹ We tested 60 of the 101 calls for the standard telephone greeting required by the Citywide Phone Standard.

“We agree with the audit results that CALLDOT complies with the Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service and provides useful information to its customers; Call Managers are courteous and friendly and handle calls in a professional and efficient manner; and CALLDOT promptly mailed accurate and useful information when requested to do so.”

The full text of DOT’s comments is included as an Addendum to this report.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Objectives.....	3
Scope and Methodology.....	3
DOT Response	4
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	5
Incorrect Referral Phone Numbers or No Referral Numbers Provided.....	6
Transferring Callers to Referred Phone Numbers.....	8
Disconnected Calls.....	8
Answering Calls with a Standard Greeting.....	9
<i>APPENDIX I</i>	<i>10</i>
ADDENDUM	

*The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Management Audit*

**Audit of the Effectiveness of
The DOT Customer Service Call Center
(CALLDOT)**

MH02-136A

INTRODUCTION

Background

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) maintains the city's streets and many of its bridges and highways and operates the Staten Island Ferry and many parking lots and garages in the City. DOT also oversees many private ferries and monitors franchised private bus lines. In 1996, DOT installed an automated customer service telephone line system, CALLDOT, that offers recorded information, as well as a mechanism to make complaints and requests within DOT's service areas. CALLDOT operates 12 hours a day, five days a week.

In the Fiscal Year 2001 Mayor's Management Report, DOT reported that CALLDOT handled an average of 1,560 calls each weekday— a 56 percent increase since the inception of the service in Fiscal Year 1996. Callers hear an automated greeting that offers a menu of options to choose from. Callers can reach an operator (Call Manager) directly at any time by pressing "0." The Interactive Voice Response system (IVR), an automated component of CALLDOT through which callers obtain information, handled 52 percent of the calls received in Fiscal Year 2001. Call Managers handled the remaining 48 percent of the calls.

In conjunction with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DOITT), DOT added an Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) in February 2000. The ACD technology allowed DOT to view real-time information and obtain reports about call volume and waiting times. It also provided recorded messages to callers on hold. DOT used the data from the ACD to redeploy CALLDOT staff at peak periods to speed up the handling of calls.

After September 11, 2001, the CALLDOT Call Center moved its operations from 40 Worth Street to a temporary location in Queens. CALLDOT's 27 Call Managers share office space with the Parking Permits for People with Disabilities (PPPD) Customer Service Unit and with Traffic Operations. As of May 2002 CALLDOT was still operating from this location, at which the IVR system was replaced with a call routing system that plays a four-minute recorded message. The recorded message provides a brief overview of current travel information.

Following the recorded message, the system transfers the caller to a Call Manager. When a complaint regarding streetlights, street defects (potholes), or traffic signals is received by a Call Manager, the information is entered into the DOT computer system, which automatically forwards the information to the DOT unit responsible for repairing the defect. When a call is received involving an emergency such as a street cave-in, the information is entered into the system and also written on a form. The form is forwarded to the DOT Emergency Response Unit for immediate attention.

In order to provide adequate service to persons who call City agencies, the Mayor's Office of Operations established the following Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service (Citywide Standards):

- All calls to City agencies to request services or obtain information must be answered within three rings.
- Each agency must use a standard telephone greeting. At a minimum, the greeting should state the name of the agency, the person answering, and the service provided by the division.
- If an automated system is used to answer telephone calls, agencies should attempt to meet the Citywide Phone Standard, which requires that callers not be kept on hold for more than two minutes.
- Agencies must respond to all caller inquiries within 10 working days with an acknowledgement, a status report, or a resolution notification regarding the issue.

In the two one-week periods after September 11, 2001, calls increased to 15,469 and 24,767, respectively. Since the beginning of 2002, calls have leveled off to approximately 6,250 per week. The ACD and IVR systems are not available at the Queens location. Many functions that were handled automatically by the above-mentioned systems now have to be handled manually. For example, call volume, which was formerly calculated automatically, is now calculated by adding the ticks that each Call Manager marks on a log sheet classifying the types of calls received. The log sheets are collected every hour by a CALLDOT supervisor, who calculates the tick marks to obtain a daily total count of calls handled. Similarly, a weekly report is manually compiled to monitor the number of calls handled by individual Call Managers.

Objectives

The objectives of this audit were to:

1. Determine whether CALLDOT is in compliance with the Citywide Standards for Customer Service.
2. Determine whether CALLDOT is providing accurate and useful information to callers.

Scope and Methodology

The scope of our audit was September 2001 through March 2002. To accomplish our objectives, we:

- Interviewed DOT officials to obtain an understanding of the processes that CALLDOT uses to perform its functions. We interviewed the Assistant Commissioner of Customer Service, the CALLDOT Director, three Call Managers, the Technical Coordinator, and the Customer Service Director of Communications. In addition, we reviewed their policies and procedures and the Citywide Standards for Customer Service.
- Made a series of telephone calls to CALLDOT requesting transportation information, to determine whether the Citywide Standards for Customer Service were being met and whether the information provided was accurate. The initial test of 50 calls was made to CALLDOT from December 10, 2001, through December 14, 2001. We made an additional 51 calls between March 1, 2002, and March 15, 2002 (27 calls requested information that needed to be mailed to the caller and 24 calls were similar to information requests made during the initial test period.)
- Reviewed and analyzed CALLDOT tracking reports of callbacks for five randomly sampled days in January 2002 to determine whether CALLDOT responded to 164 customer complaints.
- Reviewed CALLDOT's Monthly Call Volume reports for fiscal year 2001 to understand the CALLDOT workload. These reports detail the number of calls received by CALLDOT, broken down by category. We also reviewed *Weekly Tally Reports* from the week before and the week of September 11, 2001.
- Reviewed CALLDOT's current call-routing telephone system and manual processes at its Queens location, to understand how calls are received, how they are forwarded to the Call Managers, and how they are tabulated for reporting purposes.

- Observed three Call Managers as they answered customer telephone calls. We noted, among other things, whether the Call Managers answered with the proper greeting, whether the call was transferred, whether the Call Manager provided information or wrote down complaint information from the caller, and whether the Call Manager gave a referral telephone number.
- Checked various telephone numbers listed in DOT's *Yellow Pages—A Comprehensive Directory of DOT and other Transportation-Related Services* (Yellow Pages) used by Call Managers for transportation inquiries. Each Call Manager keeps a personal copy of the Yellow Pages at his or her station.
- Reviewed the training manuals and the amount of training received by each of the Call Managers.

This audit was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and included tests of the records and other auditing procedures considered necessary. This audit was performed in accordance with the New York City Comptroller's audit and responsibilities as set forth in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter.

DOT Response

The matters covered in this report were discussed with officials from the Department of Transportation during and at the conclusion of this audit. A preliminary draft report was sent to DOT officials and discussed at an exit conference on May 17, 2002. On May 22, 2002, we submitted a draft report to DOT officials with a request for comments. We received a written response from DOT on June 6, 2002.

DOT agreed with the audit's findings and recommendations, and also stated:

“We agree with the audit results that CALLDOT complies with the Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service and provides useful information to its customers; Call Managers are courteous and friendly and handle calls in a professional and efficient manner; and CALLDOT promptly mailed accurate and useful information when requested to do so.”

The full text of DOT's comments is included as an Addendum to this report.

**OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
NEW YORK CITY**

DATE FILED: June 14, 2002

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, CALLDOT complies with Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service set forth by the Mayor's Office of Operations and provides useful information to its customers. Furthermore, the Call Managers are courteous and friendly, and handle calls in a professional and efficient manner. (The complete list of questions used for our test calls is contained in Appendix I.)

Regarding compliance with the Citywide Standards we found that CALLDOT:

- Answered 100 (99%) out of 101 telephone calls within three rings or less (automated answering system).
- Met the two-minute hold-time standard 97 (96%) out of 101 times. (Although an IVR system was not in use, we tested the time between the end of the automated message and when the Call Manager picked up the call.)
- Called 150 (91.5%) of 164 callers back with regard to the status of their complaints concerning streetlights, defective traffic signals, and street defects.

Regarding CALLDOT's ability to provide accurate and useful information, we found that CALLDOT:

- Mailed information requested by callers for the Alternate Side Parking Regulations Calendar, 22 (91.7%) of 24 times. The remaining 8.3 percent of the time, the caller never received the information.

However, we found some weaknesses that affect CALLDOT's ability to provide the best possible service:

- When Call Managers did not know the answer to our question regarding municipal parking lots, private ferry and bus services, and travel updates due to bridge construction projects, they failed to provide an answer to our question or to provide a referral telephone number seven (7%) out of 95 times. Moreover, the telephone referral numbers Call Managers provided were incorrect 10 (22%) out of 45 times.
- Call Managers failed to transfer callers directly to the referred telephone number 41 (91%) of 45 times as required by CALLDOT.
- Calls were either disconnected or never connected to a Call Manager four (4%) out of 101 times.

- Call Managers failed to provide their names when greeting the caller 16 (27%) out of 60 times.²

The following section of the report describes these weaknesses in more detail.

Incorrect Referral Phone Numbers or No Referral Numbers Provided

Call Managers could not answer our questions or provide any referral telephone number in seven (7%) of 95 calls. In addition, Call Managers provided an incorrect telephone referral number 10 (22%) of 45 times. These errors required that the caller make additional phone calls.

For example, a Call Manager gave us the telephone number for the Port Authority when we asked for the phone number for E-Z Pass. In another example, a Call Manager gave us the telephone number for the Staten Island Ferry when we asked about “Fast Ferry” service and the “NY Waterway” ferry. In a third example, when the Call Managers did not know the answer to our question regarding the availability of municipal parking near the Staten Island Ferry in Staten Island, rather than providing a referral number, the Call Manager said that we would need to call the community board.

We checked the telephone numbers listed in the DOT Yellow Pages for the eight information categories for which we requested specific information. The correct telephone numbers were listed for four categories: municipal parking lots, Fast Ferry Service, NY Waterway, and bridge construction. However, the Yellow Pages listed no telephone number for three categories: the Greenville Bus Co., Pier A, and car pool lots. An incorrect telephone number was listed for one category, E-Z Pass. The CALLDOT Director stated that she was planning to update the book, but had not had the time so far.

Each Call Manager's copy of the Yellow Pages is manually updated when there is a telephone number change. This results in crossed-out numbers and handwritten notes. DOT needs to consider a more efficient way of updating telephone numbers. This could include using a computer database with search capabilities that would allow Call Managers to search by subject.

This need is exemplified by one of our observations, during which a Call Manager quoted a telephone referral number to a caller. Moments later the same person called back and stated that the referred telephone number was incorrect. The Call Manager told the caller that the telephone number he quoted was taken from the Yellow Pages, and then asked his supervisor for assistance, who was able to find an alternate telephone number for the caller.

² We tested 60 of the 101 calls for the standard telephone greeting required by the Citywide Phone Standard.

In addition to the above examples, on two occasions Call Managers lacked current information pertaining to our question about disruptions in travel caused by current bridge-construction projects. According to the CALLDOT Director, CALLDOT is not always immediately notified by other DOT units of changes and updates to such DOT-related information as street closures, bridge repairs, limitations on turning on certain streets, and lane closures. Updated information is received sporadically. To compensate for this lack of communication, CALLDOT uses web-site complaint printouts, traffic update reports received every three hours from the Transportation Operations Coordinating Committee (Transcom), and newspaper articles, such as “Gridlock Sam” in the Daily News.

Despite these efforts, there have been instances reported to the Director when callers are aware of new DOT-related transportation issues before CALLDOT is aware of them. To alleviate this problem, we believe that a better line of communication is needed between the various DOT units and CALLDOT. The public relies on CALLDOT to give accurate and up to date information.

Recommendations

DOT should:

1. Update the DOT Yellow Pages more frequently. DOT should also evaluate the possibility of using an automated database with search capabilities to store referral phone numbers and to replace the hard-copy Yellow Pages.

DOT Response: “We agree. The Yellow Pages, which were last updated in October 2000, have been traditionally updated annually. An update was in progress when it was interrupted by the events of September 11th. The Yellow Pages are currently being revised and a new edition is expected to be completed in July 2002. Subsequent editions will be generated annually or more often if substantial revisions are needed. The feasibility of automating the database with search capabilities and replacing the hard copy will be evaluated.”

2. Develop a better system of communicating between DOT unit heads and CALLDOT that will ensure that new and updated transportation information is regularly and promptly sent to CALLDOT.

DOT Response: “We agree and CALLDOT will work with senior management to develop a more efficient procedure for communicating internally.”

Transferring Callers to Referred Phone Numbers

Call Managers rarely transferred our calls directly after providing us with a telephone referral number. Forty-one of the 45 telephone referrals (91%) provided by the Call Managers were not directly transferred.

According to the CALLDOT Director, DOT management wants callers to dial as few telephone numbers as possible to obtain information. Therefore, it is CALLDOT's unwritten policy to attempt to transfer the caller directly to the referred telephone number. We found that not all Call Managers are aware of this policy. One Call Manager stated that she was not required to provide this service and only does so upon request of the customer. Another Call Manager stated that she believed it is better for the customer to dial the referred telephone number.

Recommendation

3. DOT should instruct the Call Managers regarding CALLDOT's policy that callers are to be transferred to the referred telephone numbers.

DOT Response: “The interim telephone system has not been as reliable as the ACD and transfers are not always effected. Nevertheless, the Call Managers will be reinstructed regarding the CALLDOT policy.”

Disconnected Calls

Four (4%) out of 101 calls in our sample of telephone calls did not reach a Call Manager. These calls were either disconnected or continued to ring but were never picked up by a Call Manager.

One reason for the disconnected calls could be that the phone system currently used by CALLDOT at the Queens location is limited in its ability to handle a large number of calls. The call routing system can only hold 25 callers in the queue. Callers are kept on hold in the queue until a Call Manager is available.

In addition, CALLDOT's Queens location does not have an ACD system that can provide CALLDOT with diagnostic reports that show the frequency of disconnected calls experienced by the public. These reports are important, since they help management to better assess problems and fix them as quickly as possible. At times, CALLDOT depends on the public to report a problem. In January 2002, according to the CALLDOT Director, after a number of callers complained that they were being cut off, DOT's telecommunications unit found that three phone lines had been blocked, and fixed the problem. With an ACD system, the diagnostic reports might detect problems more quickly, so that problems can be fixed before causing additional inconvenience to the public.

Recommendation

4. DOT should continue to request that the Mayor's Office of Operations allow CALLDOT to return to its Manhattan office location where it has an ACD system. If the return to the Manhattan Office is delayed beyond a reasonable time, then DOT should install its ACD system at the Queens location.

DOT Response: "CALLDOT will be relocated to a facility that has an ACD system as soon as it is feasible."

Answering Calls with a Standard Greeting

In accordance with the Citywide Standards, Call Managers are required to use a standard telephone greeting when answering calls from the public. At a minimum, the greeting should state the name of the agency, the person answering, and the service provided or the division.

In 16 (27%) of the 60 telephone calls we made in which we tested this requirement, Call Managers failed to identify themselves when answering the call.

Recommendations

DOT should:

5. Remind all of its CALLDOT Call Managers that they must answer all telephone calls with the standard greeting.

DOT Response: "We agree and Call Managers have been reinstructed to use the standard greeting. Additionally, compliance is expected to improve as soon as CALLDOT returns to the ACD system, a system that enables management to monitor calls electronically. This combined with the relocation to contiguous work space will help ensure uniformity and protocol compliance."

6. Periodically test whether telephone calls are answered with the standard greeting by making telephone calls to CALLDOT.

DOT Response: "As noted, the return to permanent well-designed space with an ACD system will enable management to monitor calls more effectively. In the interim, Call Managers have been reinstructed to use the standard greeting. Compliance will be periodically tested by making calls to CALLDOT."

APPENDIX I

List of Questions Asked for Testing of CALLDOT

1. How often does the NY Waterway ferry run from Jersey City to Pier A?
2. How much does the bus to downtown Manhattan (Greenville Bus Co.) from Grove St (Jersey City?) cost?
3. When does the last (Greenville Co) bus leave Manhattan for Grove Street?
4. How late does the NY Waterway Ferry run from 38 th Street to Jersey City?
5. Can I take my bicycle across the George Washington Bridge?
6. I live in Hicksville, L.I. Where is the car pool lot close to me?
7. How much does the car pool lot at Shea Stadium cost?
8. Is the exit off the BQE for the Prospect Expressway open? I'll be coming from Queens in the morning.
9. Is the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel open leaving Manhattan?
10. Does the Staten Island Outerbridge Crossing still get closed at night for the construction?
11. Since there are no Path trains how do I get downtown from Jersey City?
12. How do I obtain an additional EZ Pass Tag?
13. Is the municipal parking lot at Police Plaza open?
14. Do you know where Pier A is located?
15. Is the South Avenue Bridge construction finished yet?
16. When will the new V subway line service begin?
17. How much does a round trip fare cost to ride the NY Waterway from Pier A to Jersey City?
18. I heard they are planning on resuming the Fast Ferry from Staten Island to Midtown, Is this true?
19. How much is a round trip fare for the Fast Ferry?
20. How frequently will the Fast Ferries run?
21. I would like to ride the Staten Island. Ferry to Manhattan. Is there any Municipal Parking available nearby?
22. How do I go about installing a bike rack?
23. I need to know where the "park & ride" lots are in the borough of _____?
24. What is the fee at the "park & ride" lots?
25. Who do I contact to report a broken meter?
26. Is there any planned construction to take place the rest of this week, on the Staten Island Expressway?
27. Do I need a permit to use the Municipal Parking Lot?
28. Where do I go to obtain the Parking Cards, and how much do they cost?
29. Is the "E" Train Service running back to normal today?
30. How do I go about requesting a bus stop relocation?
31. How do I get involved in the Adopt--A-Highway Program?
32. How do I go about requesting sidewalk repairs?
33. I would like to make a suggestion to improve bicyclists' commute. Would you kindly direct me to the proper department?
34. I need a listing of the private franchised bus companies DOT manages and subsidizes.
35. I haven't been to the city since Sept. 11 th . Which way has the X15 bus been routed?
36. Are they accepting vehicles on the Staten Island Ferry yet?
37. I will be having foot surgery in a few weeks and I will not be able to use the subways. Is there transportation available to get me to and from work in Manhattan?
38. How do I go about making a complaint about a rude bus driver?
39. Is the single occupancy vehicle restriction still in effect?
40. Are they accepting vehicles on the Staten Island Ferry yet?
41. How do I go about reporting a huge pothole?
42. Request mailing of 2002 Alternative Side Parking Regulations Calendar



**New York City
Department of Transportation**

Office of the Auditor General
51 Chambers Street, Room 420
New York, New York 10007
Tel: (212) 788-8160
Fax: (212) 788-8159

Iris Weinshall, Commissioner

June 6, 2002

Mr. Roger D. Liwer
Assistant Comptroller for Audits
The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
1 Centre Street, Rm 1100
New York, NY 10007-2341

Re: MH02-136A

Dear Mr. Liwer:

This is in response to your draft "Audit Report on The Effectiveness of the DOT Customer Service Call Center (CALLDOT)".

We agree with the audit results that CALLDOT complies with the Citywide Phone Standards for Customer Service and provides useful information to its customers; Call Managers are courteous and friendly and handle calls in a professional and efficient manner; and CALLDOT promptly mailed accurate and useful information when requested to do so.

The following are the recommendations included in the report and our comments:

1. "Update the DOT Yellow Pages more frequently. DOT should also evaluate the possibility of using an automated database with search capabilities to store referral phone numbers and to replace the hard-copy Yellow Pages."

We agree. The Yellow Pages, which were last updated in October 2000, have been traditionally updated annually. An update was in progress when it was interrupted by the events of September 11th. The Yellow Pages are currently being revised and a new edition is expected to be completed in July 2002. Subsequent editions will be generated annually or more often if substantial revisions are needed. The feasibility of automating the database with search capabilities and replacing the hard copy will be evaluated.

2. "Develop a better system of communicating between DOT unit heads and CALLDOT that will ensure that new and updated transportation information is regularly and promptly sent to CALLDOT."

We agree and CALLDOT will work with senior management to develop a more efficient procedure for communicating internally.

3. "DOT should instruct the Call Managers regarding CALLDOT's policy that callers are to be transferred to the referred telephone numbers."

The interim telephone system has not been as reliable as the ACD and transfers are not always effected. Nevertheless, the Call Managers will be reinstructed regarding the CALLDOT policy.

4. "DOT should continue to request that the Mayor's Office of Operations allow CALLDOT to return to its Manhattan office location where it has an ACD system. If the return to the Manhattan Office is delayed beyond a reasonable time, then DOT should install its ACD system at the Queens location."

CALLDOT will be relocated to a facility that has an ACD system as soon as it is feasible.

5. "Remind all of its CALLDOT Call Managers that they must answer all telephone calls with the standard greeting."

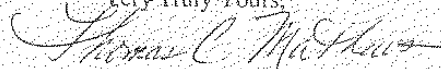
We agree and Call Managers have been reinstructed to use the standard greeting. Additionally, compliance is expected to improve as soon as CALLDOT returns to the ACD system, a system that enables management to monitor calls electronically. This combined with the relocation to contiguous work space will help ensure uniformity and protocol compliance.

6. "Periodically test whether telephone calls are answered with the standard greeting by making telephone calls to CALLDOT."

As noted, the return to permanent well-designed space with an ACD system will enable management to monitor calls more effectively. In the interim, Call Managers have been reinstructed to use the standard greeting. Compliance will be periodically tested by making calls to CALLDOT.

If you have any questions concerning this response, I can be reached at (212) 788-8162.

Very Truly Yours,



Thomas C. Mathews
Auditor General

cc: Commissioner Iris Weinshall
F/D/C Judith Bergtraum
D/C Laura Chasin
A/C Catherine Messana
Maria Guccione, MOO