

Policy on customer service



December 2022

Policy on Customer Service

Banking being a service industry, customer is the most essential ingredient for its successful operation. Reserve Bank of India, over a period of time has enunciated various regulatory directives, which is based on certain principles and practices. Studies conducted by various committees such as the Talwar Committee, Goiporia Committee, Tarapore Committee etc., are the pillars on which customer service Policy of Banks are built. We have taken all the possible steps to imbibe the spirit of RBI directives to make this Policy the most customers friendly.

1. General management of the branches (Other offices also to follow to the extent possible)

Broadly, a customer can be defined as a user or a potential user of Bank services. A 'Customer' may include:

- ❖ A person or entity that maintains an account and / or has a business relationship with the Bank;
- ❖ One on whose behalf the account is maintained (i.e. the beneficial owner)
- ❖ Beneficiaries of transactions conducted by professional intermediaries, such as Stock Brokers, Chartered Accountants, Solicitors etc. as permitted under the law, and
- ❖ Any person or entity connected with a financial transaction which can pose significant reputational or other risks to the Bank, say, a wire transfer or issue of a high value demand draft as a single transaction.

1.1. Infrastructure facilities at branches

Branches shall provide sufficient customer service space, adequate furniture, drinking water facility etc. People with physical infirmities like pensioners, senior citizens, disabled persons, etc., will be provided with special treatment. Branches will provide special infrastructure support for physically challenging and aged customers.

1.2. Separate enquiry counters at very large and exceptionally large branches

Very large branches and exceptionally large branches shall provide separate enquiry counters in addition to a regular reception / "May I help you" counter.

1.3. Display of indicator boards

Branches shall display indicator boards at all the counters in English, Hindi as well as in the concerned regional language. Business posters at semi-urban and rural branches of Bank shall also be in the concerned regional languages.

1.4. Roving officials

Branch shall ensure that employees are available to respond to customers and facilitate them in carrying out their transactions. One of the officials at the Branch shall be designated as roving official.

1.5. Booklets for customers

Customers shall be provided with booklets consisting of all details of service and facilities available at the Bank in Hindi, English and the concerned regional languages.

1.6. Use of Hindi and regional languages in transacting business with customers, including communications to customers

Apart from English, Bank will endeavor to use Hindi and regional languages for transacting business with customers, including communications to customers.

1.7. Reviewing and improving the existing security system

Periodical review of existing security arrangement in branches shall be carried out so as to find out any lacunae and also to instill confidence amongst the employees and the public.

1.8. Wearing of identification badges by the employees

All employees shall wear identity cards displaying photo and name. The display of identity will lead to better quality of customer service. Non-adherence to this rule by any employee shall be treated as a mis-conduct.

1.9. Periodic change of desk and entrustment of elementary supervisory jobs

Personnel attending various counters/desks and supervisors shall be rotated periodically. This will happen at least once in 6 months.

1.10. Training of staff in line with customer service orientation

Technical skills in Banking of staff at delivery channels will be periodically upgraded through training. Bank will adopt all means of communications like video conferencing, on-line training modules, job cards etc.

1.11. Visit by senior officials from controlling offices and Head Office to branches

Senior officials from controlling offices and Head Office shall visit branches at periodical intervals for on the spot study of the quality of service rendered by the branches. Regional Head or his deputy shall visit the branches at least once in every half-year.

1.12. Rewarding the best branches from customer service point of view by annual awards/running shield

Bank shall select best branches for customer service and present annual award. Input from customers shall be used for arriving at the decision.

1.12. Customer service audit and customer surveys

Bank will conduct customer service audit and customer surveys on an annual basis. The input from customer survey will be used to select best Branches for customer service.

1.13. Holding customer relation programs and periodical meetings

Bank will hold customer meets to interact with different cross sections of customers for identifying action points to upgrade the customer service with customers.

1.14. Establishment of a New Product and Services Approval Process

All issues in new products and services which compromise the rights of the Common Person shall be brought to the knowledge of Board/Customer Service Committee for approval.

1.15. Quality Assurance and Support Officers

The Quality Assurance and Support Officers of each region shall ensure that the intent of Customer Service Policy is adhered to in letter and spirit.

2 Institutional frameworks

2.1. Customer Service Committee of the Board

Customer Service Committee of the Board will if found necessary co-opt experts and representatives of customers as invitees to enable the Bank to formulate policies and assess the compliance there of internally with a view to strengthening the corporate governance structure in the Bank and also to bring about ongoing improvements in the quality of customer service provided by the Bank.

2.2. Role of the Customer Service Committee

Customer Service Committee of the Board, shall address the following: -

- Formulation of a Comprehensive Deposit Policy
- Issues such as the treatment of death of a depositor for operations of his Account
- Product approval process with a view to suitability and appropriateness
- Annual survey of depositor satisfaction
- Tri-ennial audit of such services.
- Any other issues having a bearing on the quality of customer service rendered

2.3. Monitoring the implementation of awards under the Banking Ombudsman Scheme

Awards of the Banking Ombudsmen will be implemented expeditiously with involvement of Top Management. Further, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the Customer Service Committee, Bank will also:

- a. Place all the awards given by the Banking Ombudsman before the Customer Service Committee to enable them to address issues of systemic deficiencies existing in Bank, if any, which resulted in the awards; and
- b. Place all the awards remaining unimplemented for more than three months with the reasons therefore before the Customer Service Committee to enable the Customer Service Committee to report to the Board such delays in implementation without valid reasons and for initiating necessary remedial action.

2.4. Standing Committee on Customer Service

Serve as the micro level executive committee driving the implementation process and providing feedback. The constitution and functions of the Standing Committee is as indicated below: -

- a. The Standing Committee shall be chaired by Executive Director and include non-official independent members to enable a reliable feedback on the quality of customer service rendered by the Bank.
- b. The Standing Committee is entrusted with the task of ensuring timely and effective compliance of the RBI instructions on customer service.
- c. To receive the necessary feedback to determine departments of the Bank act in tune with the spirit and intent of instructions.
- d. To review the practice and procedures prevalent in the Bank and take necessary corrective action, on an ongoing basis.
- e. A brief report on the performance of the Standing Committee on the areas reviewed, procedures/practices identified and simplified/introduced will be submitted periodically to the Customer Services Committee of the Board.

2.5. Branch Level Customer Service Committees

In order to encourage communication between the customers and the Bank at the branch level, branch level committees shall be formed with greater involvement of customers. Senior citizens being an important customer segment will get represented in the committee. To improve the service, Branch Level Customer Service Committee will meet at least once a month. The committee will study complaints and accept suggestions from customers and members of the Committee. Committee will find out ways and means of improving customer service. The branch level committees will also submit quarterly reports with inputs/suggestions to the Standing Committee on Customer Service. Standing Committee will examine these inputs and provide relevant feedback to the Customer Service Committee of the Board for necessary Policy / procedural action.

2.6. Nodal Department/ Official for customer service

Service Quality Department at Head Office is designated as a nodal department for customer service in the H.O level and Head of Service Quality Department will be the nodal officer for customer service.

3. Board approved policies on Customer Service

3.1. Board approved policies

Bank has Board approved policies for the following: -

- a. Cheque Collection Policy
- b. Citizen charter
- c. Code of Bank's Commitment to Customers
- d. Code of Bank's Commitment to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE Code)
- e. Collection of Dues and Repossession of Security Policy
- f. Customer Compensation Policy
- g. Customer Grievance Redressal Policy
- h. Customer Service Policy
- i. Model Policy on Deposits

3.2. Giving publicity to the policies

- a. Bank shall ensure that wide publicity is given to the above policies formulated by it by placing them on Bank's web-site and also by making it available in the notice board in

the branches. Copies shall be made available at Branches for reference by customers on demand.

- b. The customers shall be clearly apprised of the assurances of the Bank on the services at the time of establishing the initial relationship.
- c. Bank shall take necessary steps to keep the customers duly informed of the changes in the policies formulated by it from time to time.

4. Opening / Operation of Deposit Accounts

The details are covered in separate Policy.

5. Statement of Accounts / Pass Books

5.1. Issuance of Pass Book to Savings Bank Account Holders (Individuals) Bank shall offer pass book facility to all the savings Bank account holders (individuals) and in case the Bank offers the facility of sending statement of account and the customer chooses to get statement of account, the Bank will issue monthly statement of accounts. The cost of providing such Pass Book or Statements will not be charged to the customer.

5.2. Updating Pass Books

- a. Customers will be made conscious of the need on their part to get the Pass Books updated regularly and employees will be advised on the importance to this area.
- b. Wherever Pass Books are held back for updating, because of large number of entries, paper tokens indicating the date of its receipt and also the date when it is to be collected shall be issued.
- c. Whenever a passbook is tendered for posting after a long interval of time or after very large number of transactions, a printed slip requesting the depositor to tender it periodically will be given.

5.3. Entries in Pass Books / Statement of Accounts

The Bank will give constant attention to ensure entry of correct and legible particulars in the Pass Books and Statement of Accounts. With a view to avoid inconvenience to depositors, the Bank will avoid such inscrutable entries in Pass Books / Statement of Accounts and ensure that brief, intelligible particulars are invariably entered in Pass Books / Statement of Account.

5.4. Maintenance of Savings Bank Pass Books: precautions

Negligence in taking adequate care in the custody of Savings Bank Pass Books facilitates fraudulent withdrawals from the relative accounts. A few precautions in this regard are given below:

- a. Branches should accept the pass books and return them against tokens.
- b. Pass Books remaining with the branches should be held in the custody of named responsible officials.

- c. Overnight custody of Pass Books will be held under lock and key.

5.5. Providing monthly Statement of Accounts

Bank will ensure to adhere to the monthly periodicity while sending Statement of Accounts. The Statements of Accounts for current account holders will be sent to the depositors in a staggered manner instead of sending by a target date every month. The customers may be informed about staggering of the preparation of these statements.

5.6. Address / Telephone Number of the Branch in Pass Books / Statement of Accounts

In order to improve the quality of service available to customers, the address / telephone number of the branch will be mentioned on the Pass Books / Statement of Accounts.

6. Acceptance of cash over the counter

Branches shall accept cash over the counters from all the customers who desire to deposit cash at the counters.

7. Service at the counters

7.1. Banking hours/working days

Bank shall normally function for public transactions at least for 5 hours on week days and 1st, 3rd & 5th Saturdays in the larger interest of public and trading community. In the case of extension counters, satellite offices, one-man offices or other special class of branches which may remain open for such shorter hours as may be considered necessary.

7.2. Changes in Banking hours

Bank shall fix, after due notice to its customers, whatever business hours are convenient to it i.e. to work in double shifts, to observe weekly holiday on a day other than Sunday or to function on Sundays in addition to the normal working days, subject to observing normal working hours for public transactions referred to in paragraph above. For closing any of its offices on a day other than a public holiday, Bank will give due and sufficient notice to the parties concerned.

7.3. Commencement / Extension of working hours

Commencement of employees' working hours shall be 15 minutes before commencement of business hours at branches in Metropolitan, Urban and Semi Urban centers subject to the provisions of the local Shops and Establishments Act. The Branch Managers and other supervising officials shall, ensure that the members of the staff are available at their respective counters with all necessary ledgers, computers etc., ready right from the commencement of Banking hours and throughout the prescribed business hours so that there may not be any grounds for customers to wait. Branch shall ensure that no counter remains unattended during the business hours and uninterrupted service is rendered to the customers. Further, the Branch will allocate the work in such a way that no Teller counter is closed during the Banking hours at their branches. All the customers entering the Banking hall before the close of business hours shall be attended to. Branch shall also ensure that customers visiting Branches during business hours are properly serviced.

7.4. Extended business hours for non-cash Banking transactions

Bank will extend business hours for Banking transactions other than cash, up till one hour before close of the working hours. The following non-cash transactions will be undertaken during the extended hours, i.e., up to one hour before the close of working hours:

(a) Non-voucher generating transactions:

- (i) Issue of pass books/statement of accounts;
- (ii) Issue of cheque books;
- (iii) Delivery of term deposit receipts/drafts;
- (iv) Acceptance of share application forms;
- (v) Acceptance of clearing cheques;
- (vi) Acceptance of bills for collection.

(b) Voucher generating transactions:

- (i) Issue of term deposit receipts;
- (ii) Acceptance of cheques for locker rent due;
- (iii) Issue of travellers cheques;
- (iv) Issue of gift cheques;
- (v) Acceptance of individual cheques for transfer credit.

Such non-cash transactions to be done during the extended business hours will be notified adequately for information of the customers.

The Bank may have evening counters at the premises of existing branches in Urban/Metropolitan centres for providing facilities to the public beyond the normal hours of business. Bank will ensure that transactions conducted during the extended hours of business are merged with the main accounts of the branch from where it is providing the aforesaid facilities. Bank will give due notice to the constituents about the functions to be undertaken during the extended Banking hours through local newspapers, as also by displaying a notice on the notice board at the Branch(es) concerned. Further, as and when the hours of business of any of the branches are extended, the concerned clearing house will be informed.

8. Disclosure of Information

8.1. Assistance/guidance to customers

All branches, except very small branches will have “Enquiry” or “May I Help You” counters either exclusively or combined with other duties, located near the entry point of the Banking hall.

8.2. Display of time norms

Time norms for specialized business transactions shall be displayed predominantly in the Banking hall.

8.3. Display of information - Comprehensive Notice Board

Notice Board enables customers to take informed decision regarding products and services of the Bank and be aware of their rights as also the obligations of the Bank to provide certain essential services. It also disseminates information on public grievance redressal mechanism and enhances the quality of customer service in the Bank and improves the level of customer satisfaction.

8.4. Notice Board

The Bank will display the information in the Notice Board in the Branches as per the format given for the Comprehensive Notice Board by the internal working group of RBI. While displaying the information in the notice board, Bank will also adhere to the following principles:

- a. The notice board will be updated on a periodical basis and the board will indicate the date up to which the board was updated.
- b. Display will be simple and readable.
- c. The language requirements (i.e., bilingual in Hindi speaking states and trilingual in other states) will be taken into account.
- d. The notice board shall specifically indicate wherever recent changes have been done.
- e. The notice board will also indicate a list of items on which detailed information is available in booklet form.

In addition to the above Board, the Bank will also display details such as 'Name of the Bank / branch, Working Days, Working Hours and Weekly Off days' outside the branch premises.

9. Booklets/Brochures:

The detailed information as indicated in the Notice Board shall be made available in various booklets / brochures as decided by the Bank for reference by customers on demand. These booklets /brochures may be kept in a separate file / folder in the form of 'replaceable pages' so as to facilitate copying and updating. In this connection, Bank may also adhere to the following broad guidelines:

- ❖ The file / folder may be kept at the customer lobby in the branch or at the 'May I Help You' counter or at a place that is frequented by most of the customers.
- ❖ The language requirements (i.e. bilingual in Hindi speaking states and trilingual in other states) shall be taken into account.

9.1. Website

The detailed information as indicated in Para of the Notice Board will also be made available on the Bank's web site. Bank will adhere to the broad guidelines relating to dating of material, legibility, etc. while placing the same on the websites. Bank will ensure that the customers are able to easily access the relevant information from the Home Page of the Bank's web site. There are certain information relating to service charges and fees and grievance redressal that will be posted compulsorily on the website of the Bank. Reserve Bank is providing a link to the websites of Banks so that customers can also have access to the information through RBI's website.

9.2. Other issues

Bank will ensure that the mandatory displays will not be obstructed in anyway. As customer interest and financial education are sought to be achieved by the mandatory display requirements, they will also be given priority over the other display boards. Information relating to Government sponsored schemes as applicable location-wise will be displayed according to their applicability.

9.3. Display of information relating to Interest Rates and Service Charges – Rates at a quick glance

Interest Rates and Service Charges at a quick glance will be made available as per the format devised by Reserve Bank in Bank's website and will be made easily accessible from Home Page of the web site.

9.4. Disclosure of Information by Bank in the public domain

Disseminating information on products and services on websites is an effective channel for reaching out to customers and the public. These disclosures increase transparency in operations and also to help to create awareness among the customers about the products and services offered by Banks. Some of the details, which could be at the minimum, are made available for public viewing through website of Bank is listed below:

I. Policy / Guidelines

- a. Citizen's Charter
- b. Model Policy on Deposits
- c. Cheque Collection Policy
- d. Fair Practices Code for Lenders
- e. Code for Collection of Dues and Repossession of Security
- f. Code of Bank's Commitment to Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE Code)

II. Complaints

- a. Grievance Redressal Mechanism
- b. Information relating to Banking Ombudsmen

III. Opening of Accounts

- a. Account Opening Forms
- b. Terms and Conditions
- c. Service Charges for various type of services – will cover common services– What services are available without any charges.
- d. Interest rates on Deposits
- e. Minimum balances – along with corresponding facilities offered.

IV. Loans and Advances

- a. Application forms relating to loans and advances
- b. Terms and Conditions
- c. Processing fees and other charges
- d. Interest rates on Loans and Advances

V. Branches

- a. Details of branches along with addresses and telephone numbers (with search engine for queries relating to branch location)
- b. Details of ATMs along with addresses

10. Cheque Drop Box Facility

Both the drop box facility and the facility for acknowledgement of the cheques at regular collection counters will be available to the customers and no branch will refuse to give an acknowledgement if the customer tenders the cheques at the counters. Customers will not be compelled to drop the cheques in the drop box. Further, in the context of customer awareness

in this regard, Bank will display on the cheque drop-box itself that "Customers can also tender the cheques at the counter and obtain acknowledgment on the pay-in-slips". The above message will be displayed in English, Hindi and the concerned regional language of the State.

11. Extension of Safe Deposit Locker / Safe Custody Article Facility

The following guidelines supersede all the guidelines issued earlier in this regard.

11.1. Linking of Allotment of Lockers to placement of Fixed Deposits

Bank will not link the lockers facility with placement of fixed or any other deposit

11.2. Fixed Deposit as Security for Lockers

Bank may face situations where the locker-hirer neither operates the locker nor pays rent. To ensure prompt payment of locker rent, Bank may at the time of allotment, obtain a Fixed Deposit, which would cover 3 years rent and the charges for breaking open the locker in case of an eventuality. However, Bank shall not insist on such Fixed Deposit from the existing locker-hirers.

11.3. Wait List of Lockers

Branches shall maintain a wait list for the purpose of allotment of lockers and ensure transparency in allotment of lockers. All applications received for allotment of locker shall be acknowledged and given a wait list number.

11.4. Providing a copy of the agreement

Branch will give a copy of the agreement regarding operation of the locker to the locker-hirer at the time of allotment of the locker.

Security aspects relating to Safe Deposit Lockers

11.5. Operations of Safe Deposit Vaults/Lockers

Bank shall exercise due care and necessary precaution for the protection of the lockers provided to the customer. Bank shall review the systems in force for operation of safe deposit vaults / locker at the branches on an on-going basis and take necessary steps. The security procedures shall be well documented and the concerned staff shall be properly trained in the procedure. The internal auditors shall ensure that the procedures are strictly adhered to.

11.6. Customer due diligence for allotment of lockers / Measures relating to lockers which have remained un-operated

In this connection, Bank shall take following measures:

- a. Branch shall carry out customer due diligence for both new and existing customers at least to the levels prescribed for customers classified as medium risk. If the customer is classified in a higher risk category, customer due diligence as per KYC norms applicable to such higher risk category shall be carried out.

- b. Where the lockers have remained un-operated for more than three years for medium risk category or one year for a higher risk category, Branch shall immediately contact the locker-hirer and advise him to either operate the locker or surrender it. This exercise shall be carried out even if the locker hirer is paying the rent regularly.
- c. Further, Branch shall ask the locker hirer to give in writing, the reasons why he / she did not operate the locker. In case the locker-hirer has some genuine reasons as in the case of NRIs or persons who are out of town due to a transferable job etc., Bank may allow the locker hirer to continue with the locker. In case the locker-hirer does not respond nor operate the locker, Bank shall consider opening the lockers after giving due notice to him. In this context, Bank shall incorporate a clause in the locker agreement that in case the locker remains un-operated for more than one year, the Bank would have the right to cancel the allotment of the locker and open the locker, even if the rent is paid regularly.
- d. Bank shall have clear procedure drawn up in consultation with legal advisers for break open the lockers and taking stock of inventory.

11.7. Embossing identification code

Bank will ensure that identification Code of the Bank / branch is embossed on all the locker keys with a view to facilitate Authorities in identifying the ownership of the locker keys.

12. Customer Confidentiality Obligations

The scope of the secrecy law in India has generally followed the common law principles based on implied contract. The Bankers' obligation to maintain secrecy arises out of the contractual relationship between the Banker and customer, and as such no information shall be divulged to third parties except under circumstances which are well defined. The following exceptions to the said rule are normally accepted:

- (i) Where disclosure is under compulsion of law
- (ii) Where there is duty to the public to disclose
- (iii) Where interest of Bank requires disclosure and
- (iv) Where the disclosure is made with the express or implied consent of the customer.

Members of staff shall adhere to maintain confidentiality of customer and his transactions.

13. Employee obligations

All staff members shall extend warm and courteous services to the customers.

- a. All staff members shall dress decently in clean and neat attire, which should reflect our respect and regard to customers.
- b. All customers are to be dealt with politely. Staff members should not get angry and should avoid bitter exchange of words with customers. Staff members should be cool, calm and polite.
- c. All staff members should wear identity card/badge.

- d. All staff members should report to work 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the business hours in Metro, Urban and Semi Urban Branches. They should be ready to offer services from the time prescribed for commencement of business by carrying out the preliminary works, like opening of the computers, keeping the ledgers, cash etc., ready etc., before commencement of business. E.g., the working hours of the staff members of normal branches will commence at 9.45 a.m. and will end at 4.45 p.m.; the business hours will be 10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.
- e. Depending upon the volume and nature of business and profile of customers, Branches shall make arrangements to stagger the lunch recess, so that customers reporting to the branches during the declared/notified lunch recess are attended to. It shall be ensured that no employee is required to work continuously for more than 4 hours without having a recess
- f. No gifts, donations, subscriptions etc., other than that approved by the Bank shall be solicited and/or accepted by the staff members from the customers or others.
- g. Breach of any of the rules laid down in this Policy by any member of staff will be a misconduct.
- h. Heads of office/Branch will be responsible to ensure compliance of the above and other guidelines in this Policy by all the employees in the office/branch

14. Special measures to ensure continuous and safe Customer Service in Covid 19 situation through Branches and other channels

The Customer Service Policy is being renewed at the time when the world is facing disruptions due to the COVID 19 pandemic. In the light of this, the following clauses are incorporated into the Policy:

- Branches will ensure all steps are taken to ensure safety of customers and staff.
- The branch shall undertake proper hygiene steps to sanitize premises, ATMs, currency notes as per protocol and safety norms announced from time to time.
- Employee hygiene measures like daily temperature check, usage of sanitizers and protective equipment like gloves, mask etc should be ensured.
- Adequate steps shall be taken to ensure social distancing measures are practiced in the branch premises.
- Customers shall be provided sanitizers at the entrance.
- Where branches are required to be closed due to instructions from the relevant authorities, a notice shall be affixed at the branch entrance that provides details of (a)

Approximate number of days when the branch will remain closed (b) The address and contact details of the closest branch that is open for business.

- Branches shall provide Door step banking to Senior citizens/vulnerable customers
- The Bank shall provide timely and proactive communication to customers through Social media, website, SMS, email regarding changes in banking hours/ closure of branches in lock down and containment zones, heightened safety precautions, digital capabilities, operational changes etc.
- Customers shall also be informed, proactively, about possible delay in delivery of cards, cheque book etc.,
- The Bank shall ensure timely and suitable actions regarding new government programmes, moratorium measures and related matters. Proper communication to customers through all possible channels shall be maintained on such items
- Branches and Contact Centre should encourage our customers to register themselves for various digital capabilities that bank is extending to suit their requirement so that Contactless banking is practiced to the extent possible.
- The Bank has introduced an appointment facility called FedSwagat. Branches and Contact Centres shall encourage customers to use this facility to book appointments prior to visiting the branch.
- The Bank shall send periodical alerts to customers through SMS/email regarding possibilities of Covid related phishing mails, unauthorized KYC requests, OTP/PIN sharing etc

