



CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

Summary

Publication Date	
Related Legislation/Applicable Section of Legislation	Schedule 2 of the Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000 Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000
Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Standards, By-laws, Frameworks	Water and Sanitation By-Law Fire Safety By-Law Municipal Health By Law Revenue Management By-Law Waste Management By-Law Disaster Management By-Law Amathole District Municipality Communications Strategy Amathole District Municipality Policy Framework
Replaces/ Repeals <i>[indicate whichever is relevant, if any]</i>	Repeal
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Department responsible	Strategic Planning and Management
Unit responsible	Communications and Customer Care
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REVISION RECORD

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1. TITLE

Customer Care Policy

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is:

- to guide the actions of staff when dealing with our customers;
- to provide service excellence whenever customers make contact with the municipality, to ensure that 'getting it right the first time' is the customers' experience in interactions with the municipality;
- to incorporate the eight Batho Pele principles that is intended at transforming public service

3. SCOPE

This policy is binding on all Amathole District Municipality (ADM) members of staff interacting with users and consumers of ADM's services, that is its Customers.

4. POLICY DETAIL

4.1. Policy Principles

This Policy ascribes the following principles in respect of customer care:

4.1.1 Batho Pele Principles

Batho Pele means "people first" and include eight principles that are the foundation of our Government's approach to guide all interaction between Government and members of the public.

In the context of customer care at the Amathole District Municipality (ADM) the eight principles can be articulated as follows:

(a) Consultation

Customers should be consulted about the level and quality of the municipal services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.

(b) Service standards

Customers should be told what level and quality of municipal service they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

(c) Access

All Customers should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.

(d) Courtesy

Customers should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

(e) Information

Customers should be given full accurate information about the municipal services they are entitled to receive.

(f) Openness and transparency

Full disclosure should be made to customers making any enquiry as to the running of the ADM and its governance structures.

(g) Redress

If the promised standard of service is not delivered, customers should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, customers should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

(h) Value for money

Municipal services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give customers the best possible value for money.

4.1.2 Code of Conduct for Municipal Staff

The principles set out above are further entrenched by the values underpinning the Code of Conduct for Municipal Staff which all ADM staff members must adhere to, including a commitment to serving the public interest.

4.2 Commitment to Customer Care Excellence

The ADM commits to having in place, at its Satellite Offices in each local municipal area as well as at its head office in East London, dedicated customer care staff to ensure that standards of customer care, as envisaged in this policy, are adhered to.

The ADM encourages customers to provide feedback via the channels listed below:

4.2.1 Via ADM's Satellite Offices:

4.3.2 Via Municipal Manager's office:

4.3.3 Via the By-Law Enforcement Centre

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Authority
5.1 Create, evaluate, review and adapt the Customer Care Policy	Council
5.2 Implement and enforce this policy 5.3 Establish and control the administration necessary to fulfil this policy, and report efficiently and regularly to the Executive Mayor and Mayoral Committee in this regard.	Municipal Manager
5.4 Disseminate information on ADM services as well as all other government departments to customers who enquire at these centres. 5.5 Assist customers who cannot read or write, to write down their query, petition or complaint and forwarding same to the relevant party within ADM for follow up.	Customer Care Officers
5.6 Adherence to the Batho Pele Principles and Customer Services Charter	ADM Employees

6. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy is supported by the attached ***Customer Service Charter***, which is attached as **annexure A**.

Through the Communications and Customer Care Unit, the municipality will develop methods of receiving customer feedback to determine levels of customer satisfaction in terms of the standard of service received.

These methods include:

- 6.1** Actively publicising and advertising in municipal buildings;
- 6.2** Toll free Customer Care Line;
- 6.3** Social Media Platforms;
- 6.4** Customer satisfaction questionnaires;
- 6.5** An email address where customers can report good or poor service, or provide feedback and suggestions;
- 6.6** Placing of suggestion boxes in strategic places to facilitate Customer Care related feedback;

These monitoring mechanisms will assist the municipality in developing programmes that will address any shortcomings in the standards of service.

7. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

To give effect to this policy a detailed procedure manual will be developed and managed by the Strategic Planning and Management Department.

8. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Term	Meaning
Customer Care	Looking after customers and ensuring their satisfaction with one's business and its goods and services
Customer	any occupier of any premises to which the municipality has agreed to supply or is actually supplying services, or if there is no occupier, then the owner of the premises,
Municipal Manager	the person appointed by the Municipal Council as the Municipal Manager of the municipality in terms of section 82 of the Local Government Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) and includes any person <ul style="list-style-type: none">• acting in such position, and• to whom the municipal manager has delegated a power, function or duty in respect of such delegated power, function or duty,
WSA	Water Services Provider
Customer Care Center	Enquiries Desk
Council	The Council of Amathole District Municipality
Municipality	The Amathole District Municipality
LGMSA	Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000
By Law	The Municipality's By Law which has been adopted

9. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Water and Sanitation By-Law
Fire Safety By-Law
Municipal Health By Law
Revenue Management By-Law
Waste Management By-Law
Disaster Management By-Law
Amathole District Municipality Communications Strategy

10. REFERENCES

Billing Section and Client Services Procedure Manual
Amathole District Municipality Communications Strategy
Amathole District Municipality Policy Framework

APPENDIX

“A” : AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY SERVICE CHARTER

ANNEXURE “A”



CUSTOMER SERVICES CHARTER

What you can expect from us ...

You can expect our staff to know their job, to be honest, polite, helpful and professional. They will treat everybody fairly and make every reasonable effort to address your problems. If they can't, they will explain what happens next.

You can expect us to consult with and inform our customers of the services that we provide and the services standards that we will strive to meet.

You can expect that any decisions to provide or terminate water or sanitation services to our customers is based upon agreed principles and made in good faith.

You can expect us to tell you how to appeal against any decision made.

You can expect us to deal with complaints about services from members of the public fairly, objectively and in accordance with a well-defined procedure that everyone understands.

You can expect us to learn and change as a result of constructive feedback and comments.

You can expect us to make every effort to make sure that our water and sanitation tariffs and other charges represent value for money.

You can expect our buildings and offices to be accessible, clean and safe, providing you with a convenient place to wait and with access to toilet facilities and drinking water.

You can expect us to communicate effectively with you, doing our best to make sure that:

- Our written language is plain and easily understood;
- Services standards are simple and clearly expressed ;
- Application forms are clear and well laid out;
- You are informed of issues and changes to any aspect of the water and sanitation services provided;

- You have quick and convenient ways of making enquiries, getting answers and carrying out business with us;
- Your contact with us meets high quality service standards

You can expect us to be dressed in a respectable manner that adhere to the dress code policy of the Amathole District Municipality

You can expect us to answer telephone calls within five ringtones whenever possible

You can expect us to acknowledge receipt by letter or email within three (3) working days of receipt, or via the ADM SMS Service

What we expect from you ...

Our customers also have certain obligations.

We expect you to pay charges incurred after vacating a property unless Amathole District Municipality is given at least 48 hours notice of the customer vacating the property.

We expect you to ensure the accessibility of the meter by Amathole District Municipality at any time.

We expect you to seek Amathole District Municipality's consent for any building or construction work that might interfere with a service or system.

We expect you not to alter any works connected to Amathole District Municipality's works without its consent.

We expect you to observe restrictions imposed by Amathole District Municipality.

We expect you to respect our staff and our role as a service provider and ask for your cooperation at all times, especially showing patience at busy times.

We expect you to adhere to the By-Laws as adopted by the Council of Amathole District Municipality

We expect you to provide updated personal information voluntarily and when requested

OUR CUSTOMER CARE STANDARDS

The Amathole District Municipality is committed to the continuous improvement of the standards of service it gives to its customers. We will endeavour to provide services and manage complaints in a timeous, efficient and effective manner.

We are committed to equal opportunities and will provide:

- Clear signage to direct our Customers to where they want to go
- Buildings which are accessible and welcoming
- Disabled access wherever practicable
- Training for our staff to build awareness and understanding

DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Account Enquiries

- Feedback provided within 48 hours to 5 working days
- If applicable, corrections made before the next account run

Distribution of accounts

Statements are sent to our Customers by the first week of every month.

Meter Readings

- Meter Reading starts immediately after the billing run is done which is on the 20th and is completed on the 15th of every month.
- Amathole District Municipality will use reasonable endeavours to ensure all customers have an actual meter reading every billing cycle. Only where circumstances prevent routine meter readings, Amathole District Municipality will read the meter at least once every 3 months, and estimated charges will be used for the interim months.

Special Meter Readings

Upon request by the customer, Amathole District Municipality will determine a customer's outstanding charges outside of the normal billing cycle. Amathole District Municipality will calculate the outstanding charges by:

- Arranging for a special meter reading, where possible, at a reasonable charge, payable by the customer where the meter is 20 mm or larger; or,
- Providing an estimated bill at no cost to the customer.

DIRECTOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

Fire and Rescue

- Reaction time is 3 minutes after receipt of a call and dispatching
- The maximum attendance time is between 15 -30 minutes depending on the magnitude and the severity of the incident
- The travel distance is the time you leave the station to the scene, between 5 -20 minutes or depending on the distance to be travelled and the nature of the road

Health Compliance Licence

Certificate of Acceptability (Food Handling Premises)

- After submission of the application and inspection of premises, will take up to 7 days

Certificate of Compliance (Funeral Undertakers)

- After submission of the application and inspection of premises, will take up to 7 days

Water Quality

Amathole District Municipality is required to comply with all applicable health requirements, including the National Drinking Water Guidelines.

In addition to these requirements, Amathole District Municipality will provide a service in accordance with any commitments in its approved service standards.

Testing

Amathole District Municipality will test water quality for compliance.

By-Law Enforcement

The Municipality will ensure that all by-law complaints are handled in an objective manner

The Municipality shall serve notices for by-law transgression in a manner that does not infringe upon the dignity of the members of the community

DIRECTOR ENGINEERING SERVICES

Unplanned Interruptions – Response

Amathole District Municipality will comply with the following standards

- On average, Amathole District Municipality will respond to urgent water bursts and leaks within 60 minutes;
- Amathole District Municipality will restore unplanned water supply interruptions within 24 hours in urban areas and 72 hours in rural areas, 90% of the time;
- On average, Amathole District Municipality will respond to urgent sewerage blockages within 60 minutes;
- Amathole District Municipality will restore unplanned sewerage blockages within 12 hours, 90% of the time.
- Amathole District Municipality will restore unplanned sewerage spills within 48 hours, 90% of the time.

Amathole District Municipality will:

- Minimise the impact of unplanned interruptions to services (including restoration as soon as possible, and the provision of information); and
- Provide customers with access to drinking water in the event of a major or long-term unplanned interruptions to water services.

Pipe Bursts, Leaks or Blockages

- In the event of a burst, leak or blockage in its system, Amathole District Municipality will promptly attend the site upon notification ;
- Take action to rectify the situation, taking into account the potential or actual impact on:
 - Customers;
 - others affected by the failure;
 - property; and
 - the environment;
- Ensure that, in the event of a sewage spill on a customer's property, damage and inconvenience to customers and others affected is minimised; and
- Ensure that a sewage spill is promptly contained, cleaned up and the affected area disinfected.

Planned Interruptions – Information and Response

Amathole District Municipality will inform affected customers via notices or loud haling of the time and duration of any planned interruption to a service at least two business days in advance.

Upon request Amathole District Municipality will provide customers with access to emergency supplies of drinking water in the event of a planned interruption to water services.

Special Needs

ADM will only accommodate request for tanker services under the following conditions:

- An application for tanker services has been completed at one of ADM's satellite offices; and
- Full payment has been received by ADM.

The provision of the service is subject to the availability of a tanker.

Amathole District Municipality will keep a register of customers who require water for:

- The operation of a life-support machine; or
- Other special needs that may be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Amathole District Municipality.

Amathole District Municipality will contact customers registered under this clause:

- At least 4 business days before a planned interruption unless a longer period of notice is requested by a customer in which case that longer notice will be given if it is reasonably necessary and able to be accommodated by Amathole District Municipality, and as soon as possible in the event of an unplanned interruption to services.

In all cases Amathole District Municipality will endeavour to minimise inconvenience to these customers.

Drought and Emergencies

Amathole District Municipality may restrict or prohibit the supply or use of water in accordance with the Water Services Act, including:

- An approved drought response plan or by-laws for water restrictions;
- An approved emergency management plan.

Disconnection

Permitted Disconnection

Amathole District Municipality may only disconnect a customer's property in respect of a particular service in one of the following circumstances:

- Upon the reasonable request from the customer;
- For an urgent health or safety reason;
- For a material breach of water law by the customer;
- The property owner's infrastructure being unfit for safe or efficient continued provision of the service;
- Otherwise as permitted by water law.

Amathole District Municipality may charge for a disconnection.

Reconnection

Amathole District Municipality will reconnect a customer's property disconnected under this clause promptly upon:

- The reason for disconnection no longer persisting; or
- Receipt of a written undertaking as to compliance by the customer in a form acceptable to Amathole District Municipality;
- Payment by the customer of any reasonable charge imposed by Amathole District Municipality.

Amathole District Municipality may charge for a reconnection.

Works and maintenance

Quality improvement programs

Amathole District Municipality will implement programs to maintain its systems in accordance with its approved service standards and requirements of the Water Services Act.

In addition to this general system obligation:

- Amathole District Municipality will maintain the property service pipe if it is 25mm in diameter, or less, up to
 - the meter assembly; or
 - if no meter is installed, the property boundary.

Amathole District Municipality is not responsible for the maintenance of a backflow prevention device installed at the outlet of the meter, a private fire service, private extension or trunk services or property service pipes from private extensions.

Notice of Planned Construction Works and Property Entry

Amathole District Municipality will provide at least five business days' notice to customers and others likely to be affected by planned construction works.

Amathole District Municipality will notify customers whenever possible when it needs to enter their property to inspect or maintain its systems or the customer's infrastructure in the event of an emergency.

Amathole District Municipality need not notify customers for meter readings or trade waste inspections.

Notifications to Customers

Amathole District Municipality may, by notice or in accordance with the Water Services Act, require a property owner to:

- Allow access for Amathole District Municipality's representative to enter the customer's property;
- Maintain the property owner's infrastructure;
- Remedy a contravention of the water law; or
- Remove a tree that is obstructing or damaging its system.

Worker Identification

A representative of Amathole District Municipality will not enter a customer's property without appropriate identification.

A representative of Amathole District Municipality entering a property, except for the purpose of reading an accessible meter, will either:

- Notify the occupier of the representative's purpose for entry; or
- If no occupier is present leave a notice stating the representative's identity, and the date, time and purpose of entry.

Restoration of Works Area

Amathole District Municipality will, where applicable, provide information of its policies, practices and procedures in relation to any planned construction works, including:

- The removal of rubbish and equipment unless otherwise agreed with the customer; and
- The restoration of the street or property as closely as possible to its pre-work state.

Delivery Quality (Flow Rates)

Amathole District Municipality will ensure that a customer's water supplies meet the average flow rate of 10 l/min for a 20mm meter except if:

- A property owner's infrastructure falls short of the required condition;
- A service is provided via a private extension;
- There is a drought or an emergency;
- There is a water shortage due to peak summer demand;
- There is an unplanned or planned interruption;
- Supply is restricted or disconnected in accordance with the Charter;
- Except if the infrastructure is unable to meet this service requirement.

In relation to the test of flow rates, Amathole District Municipality:

- Will advise the customer prior to the test that a reasonable charge may be imposed if the test demonstrates compliance with clause 8.2;
- Will pay the cost of a test if it demonstrates that Amathole District Municipality is not complying with clause 8.2.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Reporting of comments, complaints and queries regarding municipal services can be done at any Customer Care Official which can be found at the following addresses:

Ngqushwa Satellite Office	115 Military Road Peddie 5640 Tel: 043 701 4143
Nxuba Satellite Office	200 Borne Accord Street Adelaide 5760 Tel: 043 701 4181
Nkonkobe Satellite Office	36 Durban Street Fort Beaufort 5720

	Tel: 043 701 4089
Amahlathi Satellite Office	17 Long Street Stutterheim Tel: 043 783 2373
Mnquma Satellite Office	Mayekiso Building or Old Pages Building Bell Street opposite Wayside Hotel
Mbashe	90 Corner Kiddel & Evelyn Street Dutywa 5000 Tel: 043 701 4118
Great Kei	8 Station Street Komga 4950 043 783 2253

Should a situation not be resolved through normal service channels, customers can report the matter to the Office of the Municipal Manager on the contact details provided below:

MUNICIPAL MANAGER

AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

PO BOX 320

EAST LONDON

5200

Communications and Customer Care

Telephone: 0800 ADM ADM (236 236)

Email: info@amathole.gov.za