Halifax Regional Municipality
311 Implementation Notice

May 3, 2012

Issued by:
Halifax Regional Municipality

Contact:

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INTRODUCTION

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is Nova Scotia’s largest and most diverse municipality. More than 43 per cent of the total population of the province resides within the municipality (Stats Canada, 2011). HRM is comprised of the former cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, the former Town of Bedford, the former Municipality of the County of Halifax and the Metropolitan Authority. Unlike other amalgamated regions in Canada, HRM has significant suburban and rural content, in addition to a large urban mix. The land area of the municipality is 5,577 square kilometers (2,224 square miles), which is an area slightly larger than the Province of Prince Edward Island, with approximately 200 communities within its boundaries and a population in excess of 408,000.

In November 2004, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) approved the assignment of 311 as the non-emergency number for municipal government services in Telecom Decision CRTC 2004-71. It is the intention of Halifax Regional Municipality to introduce a 311 service to its citizens as early as November, 2012.

At the April 3, 2012, meeting of Halifax Regional Council, the 2012/13 Operating Budget was approved. Approval of the budget included the costs associated with implementing a 311 service for Halifax Regional Municipality.

This 311 implementation notice has been prepared for distribution via e-mail to the list of contacts attached (Appendix A – 311 Implementation Notice Email Distribution List) as outlined in the Canadian Steering Committee on Numbering (CSCN) guidelines provided within CRTC Telecom Decision 2008-61.

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

HRM’s Call Centre and Dispatch Service (490-4000) has been in existence since July 2000. Operations run from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. seven days per week (except Holidays). Overnight call-taking service is provided through contracted staff and is available for urgent public works and animal control and waste water issues only.

The 490-4000 phone number is currently listed in the blue pages of the phone directory as the number to call if citizens are having trouble finding a listing. The phone number is widely distributed on various publications and on HRM’s website as the main telephone contact for municipal information and services.

Incoming calls are managed on a daily basis to ensure the customer is receiving the best, most consistent telephone experience possible. In 2011, the Call Centre produced its second annual Performance and Information Report which details its performance in measuring productivity, quality, accuracy and customer satisfaction with the service (Appendix B – Call Centre Performance and Information Report). HRM’s Call Centre and Dispatch Service through 490-4000 is already successfully providing front-line call taking service with excellent results and serves many functions and Business Unit Sections across the organization.
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The 2012/13 approved budget supports implementing a 311 service to provide citizens, businesses and visitors with simplified telephone access to municipal information and services, including:

- Implement multi-lingual service
- Implement enhanced call routing capability
- Reinstate Holiday service
- Integrate non-emergency police services line (490-5016)

To effectively support the 311 service, Halifax Regional Municipality Call Centre & Dispatch Service has a staff complement of 1 Manager, 2 Supervisors, 1 Business Analyst, 1 Trainer, 1 Administrative Assistant, 24 full-time Agents, 4 part-time Agents and up to 6 casual Agents. Some of the existing systems, tools and technologies that support the business include:

**Business Applications/Systems**

- Centrex Automatic Call Distribution (ACD)
- Perimeter VU-ACD Reporting
- CVDS Call Recorder
- Auto-Attendant
- Hansen (now known as Infor) Customer Service Module
- Groupwise e-mail (moving to Outlook)
- Windows XP (moving to Windows 7)
- Office 2010 Suite

**Call Centre Support and Office Productivity Tools**

- GIS Maps
- On-line Content and Process Manual and Websites
- Quality Monitoring tools and processes
- Business Continuity Plans (in progress)
- Standard Operating Procedures

**PROPOSED N11 SERVICE AREA**

The proposed 311 service area is the Halifax Regional Municipality’s geographic boundaries as shown on the maps attached as Appendices C – 1 and C - 2.

The service area borders on the following Counties: Lunenburg, Hants, Colchester, Guysborough. Contact with all bordering Municipalities will be made to advise them of HRM’s intention to move to a 311 service.
CALL ROUTING ARRANGEMENTS

Calls to 311 in Halifax Regional Municipality will terminate at:

Citizen Contact Centres  
Call Centre & Dispatch Services  
21 Mt. Hope Avenue  
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 1R1

The mailing address for this location is:

Citizen Contact Centres  
Call Centre & Dispatch Services  
PO Box 1749  
Halifax, NS B3J 2A5

The local number for termination of traffic will be: *(902) 490-4000*  
The toll-free number for termination of traffic will be: *(800) 835-6428*

Callers to 311 in HRM will hear an automated greeting which will give them a brief recording of service/information options, or they can be automatically transferred to receive a live answer for the operating hours of 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. From 11 p.m. until 7 a.m. an after-hours service is provided for urgent public works, animal control and wastewater issues. When dialling 311, an automated message will indicate that citizens may stay on the line for those urgent issues and they will be directed to a contracted service for help.

CALL VOLUME ESTIMATES

The current call volume at HRM’s Call Centre & Dispatch Service is approximately 520,000 annually, and approximately 10,000 e-mails. Introducing the 311 service to HRM citizens will likely see a “bump” in call volume (anticipating a 25% increase) in the short term as citizens try out the new service. HRM will not be introducing any new lines of business (except police non-emergency calls – 490-5016 which will already be in place before implementation of 311), and an effective communication strategy/plan is being prepared to advertise what services will be provided. It is not expected that the increased call volume will be sustained over time and should return to slightly increased volume in the longer term.

EXPECTATIONS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS

It is expected that all TSPs route 311 calls to HRM to a 10-digit number, which will terminate at the HRM’s Call Centre & Dispatch Service located at 21 Mt. Hope Avenue, Dartmouth. The ten digit number is 902-490-4000. It is expected that long distance callers will be routed to HRM’s toll-free number 800-835-6428.
It is anticipated that there will not be sufficient callers outside of the municipal boundaries to warrant advanced call routing. The intention will be to route any calls that may come to HRM in error by internal staff and transfer the caller to the correct municipality.

**PROPOSED TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halifax Regional Municipality 311 Implementation Notice Distribution</td>
<td>May 3, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311 Implementation Notice –related Conference Call with TSP’s</td>
<td>May 29, 2012 (tentative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 311 Implementation Conference Calls/Planning Sessions</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Launch of 311 in HRM</td>
<td>As early as November, 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Attachments:**

- Appendix A: 311 Implementation Notice Email Distribution List
- Appendix B: Call Centre Performance and Information Report
- Appendix C – 1: HRM Boundary Map
- Appendix C – 2: HRM Boundary Map
# Appendix A - Implementation Notice Email Distribution List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carrier</th>
<th>Contact Name &amp; Addresses</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell/Aliant</td>
<td>Sheldon Macdonald Capital Management &amp; Security 1505 Barrington Street, 6 North Halifax, NS  B3J 2W3</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Sheldon.macdonald@bellaliant.ca">Sheldon.macdonald@bellaliant.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bell Mobility</td>
<td>Kelly Hisaki Manager, Network Strategy 5099 Creekbank Road, 5N Mississauga, ON L4W 5N2</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kelly.hisaki@bell.ca">Kelly.hisaki@bell.ca</a></td>
<td>(905)282-3258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastlink</td>
<td>Kevin Wilson 6080 Young Street, 7th Floor Halifax, NS B3K 5L2</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kevin.wilson@corp.eastlink.ca">Kevin.wilson@corp.eastlink.ca</a></td>
<td>(902)406-3420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers</td>
<td>Jean Michel Dupuis Public Services Coordinator Rogers Wireless Partnership Rogers Comm. Partnership 800 rue de la Gauchetiere Ouest, Suite 4000 Montreal, PQ H5A 1K3</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jdupuis@rci.rogers.com">jdupuis@rci.rogers.com</a> <a href="mailto:jeanmichel.dupuis@rci.rogers.com">jeanmichel.dupuis@rci.rogers.com</a></td>
<td>(514)928-3911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telus</td>
<td>Bill Barsley 25 York Street, Floor 30 Toronto, ON M5J 2V5 (copy all correspondence to Dan MacDonald)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Bill.Barsley@telus.com">Bill.Barsley@telus.com</a> <a href="mailto:Dan.MacDonald@telus.com">Dan.MacDonald@telus.com</a></td>
<td>(416)684-7989 (647)217-8491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allstream</td>
<td>Allen Trafford Senior Regulatory Analyst Suite 1400, 45 O’Connor St Ottawa, ON K1P 1A4 (copy all correspondence to Cathy Mcgouran)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Allen.trafford@MTSallstream.com">Allen.trafford@MTSallstream.com</a> <a href="mailto:Cathy.mcgouran@mtsallstream.com">Cathy.mcgouran@mtsallstream.com</a></td>
<td>(613)688-8794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaside</td>
<td>Shane Ferguson 1318 Grand Lake Road Reserve Mines, NS B1A 1M1</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shane@seaside.ns.ca">shane@seaside.ns.ca</a></td>
<td>(902)539-6250 Ext. 235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy:</td>
<td>CSCN Distribution List (As of April 24, 2012)</td>
<td>various</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Our mission is to deliver a government service you can rely on.

The Corporate Call Centre is dedicated to providing quick and convenient access to municipal information and services. We are committed to professionalism, friendliness, and HRM pride.

More than half of a million calls were answered by the Call Centre in 2011. Over 80% of those calls were resolved at first contact. This is referred to as a Tier 1 call, which means Agents were able to provide the appropriate solution and/or information to the caller.

The remaining calls are documented and details sent to the appropriate department for follow-up. This is what is referred to as a Tier 2 call and usually means some work is required. Graffiti removal, damaged infrastructure, and tax pre-authorized payment requests are just a few examples.

This report outlines how we are doing at HRM’s Corporate Call Centre and explains our performance in measuring productivity, quality, accuracy and customer satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUICK FACTS</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Calls Received</td>
<td>535,454</td>
<td>516,272 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calls answered in 25 seconds:</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average # of calls daily:</td>
<td>1,496</td>
<td>1,454</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average calls per Agent per Day:</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abandonment Rate:</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busiest day:</td>
<td>January 18</td>
<td>November 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busiest month:</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>November</td>
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</table>

* Call volume decrease due to closure of Call Center on all Holidays 2011
Our Service Level

Grade of Service (GOS) refers to the number of calls answered within a defined number of seconds. The HRM Call Centre service level goal is 80/25: 80% of calls answered within 25 seconds. To achieve and maintain this target, we must ensure that a sufficient number of agents are available to meet the fluctuating level of demand.

Managing service levels in a Call Centre is a complex process involving many variables. The balance between changing call volume and agent coverage must always be kept in mind and can sometimes be a challenge. Too few agents results in falling below our service goal; too many agents will create a situation where we are providing excess capacity at an excess cost. Schedule forecasting and planning ahead for known events and initiatives helps us manage our grade of service however, there are some variables that impact our GOS that cannot be anticipated. Weather, street closures and emergency events such as hurricanes, extensive fires, etc. increase call volume significantly.

Average Handle Time (AHT) is an important measurement for call taking. It is the average length of time for one agent to complete one call, including talk time, hold time, and wrap-up. AHT varies depending on call volume and call types. AHT is important because it tells us how efficiently we are able to handle the call volume given the number of agents available. Technical issues, staff adherence to the schedule, staffing levels, and productivity will have a direct impact on our service levels. Mass mail-outs or advertisements with the 490-4000 number may generate an immediate and sometimes unpredictable spike in call volume. This highlights the importance of strong partnerships with all HRM Service Providers.

This table highlights two key variables for managing GOS – Call Volume and Average Handle Time. Contributing factors not shown here include staffing levels, adherence to schedule, and call type trends.

March is a good example for GOS management. Tax Bills are mailed out mid-March. This is anticipated increased call volume that can be managed through agent scheduling.

Unanticipated severe weather in November (including heavy rain on November 11 and heavy snow fall on November 23) poses a greater difficulty. Even at full capacity, we were not able to handle the high call volume at a target of 80/25.

Agent overall productivity is a combination of measurements:
- **Sign-on time**: total time agent is logged into queue
- **Wrap up**: the length of time after a call to complete call related clerical work
- **Out-going calls**: any outbound calls required to complete a service request ie dispatching fallen tree
- **Talk Time**: Actual time spent on a call (including time caller is placed on hold).

2011 Monthly Service Levels

This table illustrates how a snow event and subsequent snow clean-up impacts call volume and grade of service. During the snowfall (Wednesday, November 23) call volume more than doubles from its previous days. Residents are calling with questions and concerns regarding metro transit delays and detours, solid waste collection concerns, and snow clean-up requests. The high call volume continues after the storm ends while snow clean-up is conducted throughout the city. Depending on the severity of the snow event, call volume and GOS can be impacted for several days following.
Quality Monitoring

Every call is our opportunity to make a difference.

Quality monitoring (or call monitoring) is standard practice within the Call Centre Industry. It refers to the process of listening to business calls to improve service delivery. There are many benefits to frequent call monitoring:

- Improve individual agent quality of service
- Assess and improve scripts and processes
- Uncover common customer complaints and concerns
- Investigation of caller issues
- Improve quality of service and caller satisfaction
- Improve training/coaching programs

To realize the benefits of call monitoring, we use a system to record and archive all business calls. These calls can later be retrieved and reviewed for quality purposes.

With the Call Recorder system, monitoring is collaborative rather than authoritarian. Agents are encouraged to participate in the entire monitoring process – from random call selection to scoring their own calls. Since the activation of our Call Recorder in February 2009, there has been increased acceptance, understanding, and vast quality improvements.

This table demonstrates the average score improvement from the 4th quarter of 2009 (81%) to the 4th quarter of 2011 (95%)

### Call Monitoring Quality Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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- 80% is Achieved
- 92% is Exceeded

Agent Performance Measurement

Setting realistic goals and recognizing performance helps motivate agents to achieve high quality and productivity.

Call centres require skilled, patient and dedicated agents who can efficiently and effectively address customer concerns, while providing an outstanding and differentiated service experience. Our agents answer an average of 148 calls per day. Every call is unique, varying in both issue and caller temperament.

High productivity is an important goal for all call centres. However, when agents are evaluated solely on measures like number of calls handled and average handle time (AHT), they may be highly productive at the expense of quality and citizen satisfaction.

With that in mind, our Agent Performance Reviews are based on a balanced approach that addresses productivity, quality, reliability, and work habits. We have established realistic and attainable targets for all key performance indicators (KPIs) used to measure call centre agent performance.

These goals are clearly communicated and explained to each staff member so that they understand how they are being measured and evaluated, and why these measurements are important. Agents are given easy access to their performance results by way of regular report cards and quality monitoring reviews so they can self-manage and self-motivate.

Based on performance results, staff are provided with ongoing training and targeted coaching where required. Call centre agents, like many employees, are highly motivated by positive feedback. When agents meet or exceed their goals, we recognize their achievements and celebrate their success.

2011 Top Performance Award Winners: Doreen Lake & Denise Coombs
Our vision is simple: to be the best in customer service.

Each year the HRM Corporate Call Centre conducts a Customer Satisfaction Survey to measure the quality of the customer service our citizens receive. Callers are invited to participate and those who wish to provide their name and phone number are contacted by a third party group, hired specifically to administer the survey.

We’re proud to announce that our results have improved from year to year.

The annual Customer Satisfaction Survey is based on the drivers of satisfaction from the Citizen’s First Survey through the Institute for Citizen Centered Service:

- **Timeliness**
- **Knowledge and Competence of staff**
- **Helpfulness**
- **Professionalism**
- **Hours of Operation**
- **Overall Satisfaction with the Service**

![Customer Satisfaction Survey Graph](image)

93% of Citizens surveyed agreed:

Call Centre Agents provided Very Good or Excellent Overall Service

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Halifax Regional Municipality
Corporate Call Centre & Dispatch Services
490-4000