

## Control Of The Call

When placing or receiving a Relay call, if you are not satisfied with the CA for any reason, you may ask for another CA. You also may ask to speak to a supervisor. You do not have to offer any explanation for the request. Whenever placing or receiving a Relay call it is helpful to write down the date and time of the call, and the CA's identification number. The CA handling the call should give you his/her identification number at the beginning and end of each call. In order to maintain confidentiality and transparency, the CA is not allowed to give you his/her name. By recording the CA's identification number, you will be able to provide us with valuable feedback if necessary.

## PBX (Private Branch Exchange) Systems and 7-1-1

You may not be able to dial 7-1-1 to make a Relay call if your business has a PBX system. If you encounter this difficulty, contact the telecommunications manager or PBX coordinator from your building and ask them to re-program the PBX switch software to allow 7-1-1 access.

## Long Distance Charges

The long distance carrier you have chosen for your business service is NOT automatically applied to Minnesota Relay calls. To make sure your long distance calls are carried and billed through your existing long distance service or calling plan, it is recommended that you submit a Minnesota Relay Customer Preference form. You also may inform the CA of your preferred carrier of choice prior to placing a long distance Relay call.

If no carrier is indicated, long distance Minnesota Relay calls will be carried and billed by Sprint.

## Customer Preference Form

By completing and submitting a Minnesota Relay Customer Preference form, the Relay is able to ensure that your preferred carrier is used for all long distance Relay calls.

Call 1-800-657-3775 to request a Customer Preference form, or download the form at [www.mnrelay.org](http://www.mnrelay.org).

## More Information

The Minnesota Relay Consumer Relations Office is available to provide additional training presentations, free of charge, for businesses and their employees. You may also contact them if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Phone: 1-800-657-3775

E-mail: [mn.relay@state.mn.us](mailto:mn.relay@state.mn.us)

Minnesota Relay Business Partner information and materials are available at: [www.mnrelay.org](http://www.mnrelay.org).

# Employer's Guide

## Minnesota Relay Business Partner



Welcome to the Minnesota Relay Business Partner program. This guide is designed for employers: it includes an overview of Minnesota Relay, instructions on how to place and receive Minnesota Relay calls and information to help you become comfortable with Relay calls. We also have an Employee's Guide, which you can duplicate and distribute to new and existing employees as part of your employee training program. The Employee's Guide provides your employees with an overview of what Minnesota Relay is and how to use it to serve customers who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled.

## Background Information

For persons with a hearing or speech disability, the standard telephone is often a barrier to communication. In 1990, Title IV of the Americans With Disabilities Act required that Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) be established in each state to remove this barrier. Minnesota Relay, a public service administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce-Telecommunications Access Minnesota, satisfies this mandate. The State of Minnesota has contracted with Communication Service for the Deaf to provide Minnesota Relay.

Minnesota Relay is a free service providing full telephone accessibility to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled. A specially trained Minnesota Relay communication assistant (CA) facilitates the telephone conversation between a person who has hearing loss or a speech disability and a hearing person. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world (long distance charges apply), 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the number, length or type of calls.

Minnesota Relay makes your business accessible to people with hearing loss or a speech disability. Relay also provides an opportunity for you to re-establish contact with customers who have stopped using the telephone due to progressive hearing loss. Either you or your customer may initiate a Relay call. Receiving a Relay call is as simple as answering your telephone.

## Call Confidentiality

All Minnesota Relay CAs abide by a strict code of ethics. A federal requirement mandates that all Relay calls are kept confidential and information cannot be used by the CA for personal gain. CAs must remain impartial and no record of calls are kept.

## Receiving Calls From Relay Customers

1. When answering your telephone at work, it may be a call placed through Minnesota Relay. If it is a Relay call, you will hear “Hello, a person is calling you through Minnesota Relay. This is CA XXXX. Have you received a Relay call before?”
2. If you are not familiar with Relay say “No,” and the CA will explain how Relay works. If you have any questions, you can ask them at this time.
3. If you feel comfortable with a Relay call, say “Yes, go ahead,” and the call will begin.
4. Remember to say “Go ahead” or “GA” after each time you are finished speaking. When the CA says “Go ahead” back to you, it is your turn to speak.
5. See section on *Tips For Successful Calls* for smooth call handling.

## Making Relay Calls To Customers

1. Dial 7-1-1\* or 1-800-627-3529.
2. When a CA answers, give him/her the 10 digit telephone number of the customer you want to call.
3. Once the customer answers, proceed with the call as you would a regular phone call.
4. Remember to say “Go ahead” or “GA” after each time you are finished speaking. When the CA says “Go ahead” back to you, it is your turn to speak.
5. See section on *Tips For Successful Calls* for smooth call handling.

\*See PBX systems and 7-1-1 on page 4.

## Tips For Successful Calls

### • When Minnesota Relay calls, don't hang up.

If you answer the phone and hear “Hello, a person is calling you through Minnesota Relay,” don't hang up; that's a customer on the line. The person calling is deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled and is using Minnesota Relay to contact your business by telephone. This is not a telemarketing call and it is very important that you do not hang up on the caller.

### • Say “Go Ahead” or “GA” each time you have finished speaking.

The term “Go ahead” or “GA” is important for Relay calls for turn taking purposes. “GA” insures that you (the standard phone user) and the Relay user do not respond at the same time and miss each other's communication. Say “Go ahead” or “GA” each time you have finished speaking and are ready for a response. When you hear the CA say “GA” it is your turn to speak again.

### • Speak directly to the person calling, not the CA.

Talk in the first person and pretend the CA is not on the call. The CA is not part of the conversation and will not acknowledge you if you speak to him/her.

### • Asking the Relay user questions.

If you need to ask the Relay user a series of questions, please ask them one at a time, wait for a response, and then ask the next question. This will give the Relay user a chance to respond to each question and will reduce misunderstandings.

### • The CA will type everything that is heard.

To ensure that Relay calls are functionally equivalent to standard telephone calls, CAs type everything they hear, including background noises and voice intonations. Your words will be typed exactly as you say them.

### • Be patient, and speak slowly.

Minnesota Relay calls take longer than regular telephone calls. Because the CA must type everything you say verbatim, please speak slowly. If you are speaking too fast, the CA may ask you to slow down or repeat yourself. There may be a pause before the CA begins relaying the response back to you.

## Forms Of Relay Services Available To Meet Specific Needs

Many people think Minnesota Relay is a telephone service that connects a TTY user (deaf person) with a standard phone user (hearing person). This is only partially true. There are a variety of reasons a person cannot use a standard telephone. Minnesota Relay has many forms of services available to make telecommunications available to all, regardless of their communication needs. Minnesota Relay allows your business to have contact with ALL consumers in Minnesota.

### Traditional Relay:

This service allows telephone calls between a TTY (text-telephone) user and a hearing person (standard phone user). A Minnesota Relay communication assistant (CA) reads the TTY user's words to you, and types your words for the TTY user to read.

### Hearing Carry Over (HCO):

HCO allows a person who can hear but who has very limited or no speech capability to make and receive phone calls. Using HCO relay and a specially designed telephone with a text display, an HCO user can listen directly to your voice and type his/her response to the CA, who voices the response to you.

### Voice Carry Over (VCO):

VCO is an option for people who can speak clearly, but have hearing loss significant enough to prevent them from hearing and understanding conversations over the telephone. Using VCO relay and a specially designed telephone with a text display, a VCO user speaks directly to you. The CA types what is spoken by you for the VCO user to read.

### Speech-to-Speech (STS):

STS allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the telephone to communicate using his or her own voice or voice synthesizer. The CA revoices the words of the person with a speech disability so that you can understand him or her. The STS user will hear your responses.