

Also included in the “Important” category would be preparation for negotiations, actual negotiations, the preparation of ratification materials, and finally the creation of a new agreement. The renewal of an agreement or policy can be a large and time consuming project involving staff from different departments. Additionally, it can require some staff to be absent from the office for extended periods. Negotiations are a particularly labour intensive time period for the Executive Director.

This category also includes the need to issue any information that indicates an immediate or imminent change to any agreement and associated documents, membership cards and other important timely events not on a set schedule, including notices of events or meetings and audition notices.

The preparation and delivery of information to Council is on a predetermined schedule and these delivery dates are not flexible. Other work may need to be set aside in order to meet these dates. Council often requires additional support for ongoing activities (various committees or projects, for example), which may have fixed timelines that will have to take precedence over other work across many departments.

When a member or engager has not performed their own work in a timely fashion and now faces an immediate or imminent deadline they cannot count on their issue displacing other urgent priorities, although every effort will be made to assist them.

3. At the first available opportunity:

This category includes inquiries of a general nature or activities that either have no deadline or fixed date or when that date is significantly in the future.

4. Outside the range of service:

This category includes calls or requests that have to do with information or services not provided by Equity. In these cases, we will do the best we can to offer other contact information. This would include information about talent agents, casting directors, other unions or associations, work opportunities including non-union work, and other service providers like the Actors’ Fund or PAL.

- It is always helpful to be clear and specific about the reason for your call or email to Equity, even when you just leave a message. This information helps the staff to determine how urgent your needs are and to respond accordingly.
- Requests for information of a general nature and those not specifically related to a situation or production will be addressed at the first available opportunity.
- Inasmuch as members, engagers and members of the public expect courteous and speedy service, Equity’s staff also deserves to be treated politely. Keep in mind that they may have to finish other work or need some time in order to research your question. Please respect the staff’s need to do their work and the time that quality work takes.

Complaints Process

If you are not happy with the service that you have received

Although we always strive to do our best, there will be times when you may feel you have not received appropriate service.

- As a first step, the issue will be transferred to the employee’s immediate supervisor for resolution.
- If you are still unsatisfied, you may send an email to Elona Naqo, Executive Assistant, at servicestandards@caea.com or contact her by phone at 1-800-387-1856 ext. 223 (416-867-9165 in Toronto). If you have not already done so, she will request that you make your complaint in writing, so please send an email or letter first.

Once received and reviewed, you will be advised of the outcome of your enquiry.

Comments, questions and staff compliments may also be sent by email to servicestandards@caea.com.

Service Standards

Service Standards are an important way for Canadian Actors’ Equity Association (Equity) to ensure the delivery of optimum service levels while also providing realistic expectations.

This Service Standards policy identifies specific priorities regarding inquiry response times and procedures.

Canadian Actors’ Equity Association is a complex organization, processing between 13,000 and 14,000 contracts per year for over 2,000 separate productions. It is not unusual for Equity’s reception to receive nearly 100 phone calls in a day between our two offices. The volume of agreements and polices we manage is huge and most require significant staff assistance and information.

What should a member be able to expect?

What should an engager expect?

Does every request have the same importance?

What criteria does Equity use to determine whose question is answered first?

Service Standards clearly address these important questions. This information will also let you know how we identify what is at the top of the “to do” list and what must wait until urgent priorities have been addressed.

NATIONAL OFFICE	WESTERN OFFICE	NATIONAL OFFICE	WESTERN OFFICE
44 Victoria Street, 12th Floor Toronto, ON M5C 3C4 Tel: 416-867-9165 Fax: 416-867-9246 Members only: 1-800-387-1856 Email: busrep@caea.com	1316-750 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V5Z 1J3 Tel: 604-682-6173 Fax: 604-682-6174 Members only: 1-877-682-6173 Email: woffice@caea.com	44 Victoria Street, 12th Floor Toronto, ON M5C 3C4 Tel: 416-867-9165 Fax: 416-867-9246 Members only: 1-800-387-1856 Email: busrep@caea.com	1316-750 West Broadway Vancouver, BC V5Z 1J3 Tel: 604-682-6173 Fax: 604-682-6174 Members only: 1-877-682-6173 Email: woffice@caea.com

1. All persons dealing with Equity may expect to be treated in a courteous manner.

Everyone who calls should expect to be dealt with in a polite and businesslike manner. Common courtesy is expected from all staff in all cases. No one should be insulted, ridiculed or treated rudely. We recognize that there are cases where someone may be distressed or anxious when they call Equity and staff members are expected to speak calmly and politely in those circumstances. However, in cases when members or engagers raise their voices or use foul language (verbally or written) the staff is not expected to tolerate that kind of behaviour.

2. All persons dealing with Equity may expect a knowledgeable response to their inquiry.

The person answering phone at any given time cannot be expected to know the answer to all questions posed by a caller. However, reception should know to whom the inquiry should be directed to so that the caller can get the answer they need. The receptionist will ask a caller questions in order to determine where best to route their call. It is not helpful when a caller is vague or refuses to offer any information to help properly identify the nature of their request. Not all staff members are familiar with all agreements and policies. In order for us to help you as effectively and efficiently as possible, we recommend that you have all the pertinent information close at hand when you call or include complete information in any email.

There is a complete staff list available on the website under Contact Equity/Staff Listing. If you don't know exactly who you want to speak with when you call, please help reception determine where your call should be transferred by answering a few questions about the nature of your inquiry.

Occasionally there will be a temporary replacement at reception who is instructed to inform anyone who calls that they are a replacement and likely cannot answer what would otherwise be considered basic questions about the Association.

3. All persons dealing with Equity should expect to receive a timely response to their request for services or in response to their communication.

"Timely" means different things to different people and can mean different things in different circumstances. It is important to understand that due to the volume of work, requests must be prioritized on a triage basis. Not all calls or emails to Equity can be dealt with in the same timeframe as others. Due to the nature of the work we do, a simple "first come, first served" approach doesn't work as a way of determining the order in which we deal with competing priorities.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "triage" as meaning "the assigning of priority order to projects on the basis of where funds and other resources can be best used, are most needed, or are most likely to achieve success" and is a good concept for us to apply when trying to manage things efficiently when resources are insufficient for everything to be dealt with immediately. Equity must *triage* requests, phone calls, emails and other *incoming* work demands with all the work that must also be *outgoing*.

In all cases, except emergencies, it will likely take at least 48 hours to hear back from any staff person if their workload has not made it possible for them to take your call or answer your email right away.

There are times during the year when certain essential activities of the Association take up a significant amount of staff time and energy (dues billing periods, RRSP and tax receipt deadlines, negotiations, prior to the National Annual General Meeting, Honours Awards, face-to-face Council meetings and during the preparation of the Ends Monitoring Report). Additionally, we operate with reduced staffing during the summer and December holiday periods. However, if you have not received a response to your call or email within two (2) weeks, something may have gone amiss and your request may have been lost. Please contact us again immediately. Concerns that requests have not been answered in a timely fashion should be referred to the *Complaints Process*.

When a request for information or service comes in, these are the general principles under which the priorities are assigned. In all cases, members calling with member-related issues will receive service over non-members. All other requests will be dealt with according to the priorities below. As a rule, the priorities are also tied to the delivery of Ends as articulated in Council's Policy Governance Document.

1. Urgent or emergency issues:

The following urgent or emergency incidents are our first priority and take precedence over any other requests: an accident; an immediate health and safety problem in a workplace or a crisis that could stop or interfere with a production going ahead; engager non-payment; or a harassment problem (which may not necessarily pose an immediate safety risk, but we encourage members not to wait to report incidents of harassment of any kind).

There may be other demands made on staff due to an imposed or fixed schedule or timeline as set by the Constitution and bylaws or an agreement including such things as Council elections, National AGM notification, agreement ratifications, dues invoices etc. These activities have non-negotiable dates and while they are certainly planned well in advance they cannot be moved to accommodate incoming issues. In the case of an emergency, Equity staffs a cell phone available 24/7 to be used outside of regular work hours for urgent situations like those identified above. Callers should follow the automated phone receptionist instructions on the National Office voicemail.

2. Important:

Issues of an immediate priority would include: ensuring that arrangements are in place so that an engagement can commence, and ensuring that security is in place and contracts have been issued so that members can begin work. Unfortunately, there are a significant number of engagers who wait until the last minute to contact us or members who wait until the last minute to alert us to a problem. These circumstances inevitably leads to regular workflow being abandoned mid-stream to attend to these issues.