

## Court Users Communication Standards

### Chapter I General Provisions

#### Article 1. Scope of application

Court users communication standards (hereinafter the standards) provide for the rule of direct and [electronic communication](#) of the employees of general courts with court users; as well as regulate courtroom communication of a judge; and lay down officer appearance standard (dress code).

#### Article 2. Definitions

The definitions used in the standards shall have the following meanings:

- a. Court user – any person, directly or electronically establishing communication with an officer;
- b. Officer – employee of the court (including judge, marshal and probationer), who in the course of exercising [his/her official rights and duties](#), establishes direct or electronic communication with a court user;
- c. communication – any form of interaction between an officer and court user.

#### AAArticle 3. The principles

1. The standards are built on the following principles:

- a. integrity;
- b. courtesy;
- c. promptness;
- d. simplicity;
- e. consistency.

2. An officer shall exercise in [good faith](#) the rights and duties entrusted to him/her, have a sense of responsibility towards administering the justice in the name of Georgia.

### Chapter II Direct Communication

#### Article 4. The beginning of communication

When hosting a court user an officer shall:

1. establish an [eye contact](#) and smile;
2. greet him/her friendly (without familiarity)
3. address him/her by name if the name is known to the officer;
4. act with courtesy;
5. offer him/her help (..How may I help you?).

#### AAArticle 5. The course of communication

1. An officer shall address a court user by name (if an officer doesn't know court user's name and doesn't have his/her identity document, s/he may ask a court user a question "Excuse me, what is your name?" or "Excuse me, how may I address you?" or "Excuse me, would you remind me your name?" etc.), be in formal terms with him/her and address by "Ms." or "Mr..".

2. An officer shall carefully concentrate on a court user. Officer-court user communication shall not be uninterrupted. Any other action may not be performed simultaneously during communication with a court user (e.g. eating, drinking, chewing a gum, speaking with a third person, filing of documents, working in a computer etc.). If communication with a court user is interrupted (e.g. office telephone call, third person's question, leaving a court user for his/her own business etc.) an officer shall apologize and rapidly solve the created interruption. It is desirable that when communication is reestablished, an officer apologizes again to a court user for the interruption. If the reason of interruption in a court user communication is third person's question, an officer shall ask the third person to wait and only in exceptional cases give an answer to a question.

3. An officer shall carefully listen and not interrupt a court user in the conversation. After court user finishes his part, an officer shall put questions to a court user if the meaning of his/her request is not clear or needs clarification.

4. Preferably an officer shall communicate with a court user by using positive and not negative formulations of sentences. Instead of stressing the inadmissibility of court user request, an officer shall focus on procedural option if any.

5. An officer shall speak in a laconic and plain language. In communication with a layman an officer shall use the terminology understandable for an ordinary, intelligent person not having law education and shall define the meanings of notions that will not be comprehensible for a court user.

6. An officer shall protect court user's right to personal, commercial and/or professional confidentiality and not disclose them to others unless requested by a court user himself/herself.

7. An officer shall supply a court user with full and reliable information available to him/her. If an officer is not sure about the reliability of the information to be issued, s/he shall apologize and double check the reliability of information with a competent officer. An officer shall personally obtain the information unknown to him but available within the court system. When performing this duty an officer is authorized to contact other officer despite his/her position in the organizational structure and location. An officer shall be released from this duty if information cannot be objectively obtained or if it is unjustified due to court user's interests. If so, an officer shall readdress a court user.

8. In the event where, for sufficient cause, a court user's need cannot be met, an officer shall express regret (I'm sorry but...) and give grounds of refusal.

9. An officer shall not argue with a co-worker in the presence of a court user.

#### Article 6. Readdressing a court user

1. When readdressing, an officer shall explain a court user the reasons of readdressing him/her.

2. Readdressing may be a general and/or personified. An officer shall give a court user as complete contact details as possible of a person that s/he has been readdressed to (last name and first name; position; name; address; telephone and fax numbers; e-mail; working hours). An officer may give a court user several options for persons to be readdressed to, if available.

3. Upon request, a court user may be provided in writing the contact details of a person to be readdressed to.

#### Article 7. Communication with unhappy court user

1. An officer shall carefully listen to an unhappy court user.

2. If a court user's unhappiness is caused by court's fault, officer shall acknowledge it, apologize and promptly correct the created problem even if s/he is not personally culpable for it. If an officer is not entitled to eliminate the problem, s/he shall contact the competent employee. If contact is impossible or ineffective s/he shall readdress the court user.

3. An officer shall not accuse a court user of lying even if s/he is sure of it.

4. An officer shall inform a court user of the measures taken and deadline needed for problem solution.

5. If a problem cannot be solved within a reasonable time period, an officer shall take court user's contact details, promise to contact him/her after a certain period of time and apologize. An officer shall not violate the period of time promised. If it turns out that additional time is needed for problem solution, an officer shall contact a court user within the promised period, explain the reasons of delay, apologize and inform of the next period for contacting him/her.

#### Article 8. Communication during technical disturbance

If a request cannot be met for reason of technical disturbance, an officer shall apologize to a court user. An officer shall not discuss the problem with a court user if the disturbance is a short-term one. An officer shall explain to a court user the reasons of disturbance. Inform him/her of the expected time of adjustment and offer options, if any, if disturbance is a long-term one.

#### Article 9. End of communication

1. In the end of communication an officer shall establish eye contact with a court user and smile.

2. An officer shall make sure that court user is left happy after the communication with him/her. If a court user is unhappy, an officer shall try to correct his/her approach. An officer may offer the court user the court's business card and show willingness for further assistance.

3. An officer shall say goodbye to and thank a court user.

4. Until saying goodbye to one court user an officer shall not enter into communication with another.

### Chapter III

#### Electronic communication

#### Article 10. General provision

Electronic communication shall be performed in accordance with the rules stipulated under Chapter II, in consideration of the changes and amendments provided for under this Chapter.

#### AAArticle 11. Telephone communication

1. An officer shall at the beginning of and regularly during the workday make sure that his/her office telephone is working.

2. An officer shall answer the phone no later than the third ring.

3. An officer shall address a court user by saying his/her first and last name and the wording "speaking".

4. An officer shall speak on the phone in a pleasant, moderate voice and not make a court user think that s/he is in a hurry.

5. Where necessary an officer may readdress a court user.

#### Article 12. E-mail communication

1. An officer shall at the beginning of and regularly during the workday check his/her e-mail.

2. An officer shall reply to e-mails received before 16:00 on the same day, and e-mails received after 16:00 next day, other than the law-stipulated or reasonably justified exceptions.

3. An officer's e-mail shall be written in compliance with the template given in Annex 1 of these Standards.

### Chapter IV

#### Courtroom Communication of a judge

#### Article 13. General provision

Courtroom communication of a judge shall be carried out in accordance with the rules stipulated under Chapter II, in consideration of the changes and amendments provided under this Chapter.

Article 14. Courtroom communication of a judge

1. A judge shall reservedly and respectfully treat the court users.
2. A judge shall speak in an official style, in a voice of principle and if necessary moderately strictly but without insulting a court user's dignity.
3. A judge shall carefully listen to a court user without interrupting him/her. This rule shall not apply if court user's talk is irrelevant to the merit of the case or aims at unjustifiably delaying the proceedings.
4. A judge shall not come into conflict with a court user nor shall s/he show familiar treatment.
5. A judge shall speak laconically and in a plain language, clearly understandable for a court user the meaning of his/her question, request or decision.
6. Judge's communication shall not cause objective doubt as to his/her bias or tendency.
7. A judge as a neutral arbitrator shall not show his/her personal attitude and feelings neither in a verbal nor nonverbal (mimicry, body language etc.) manner.
8. The rules under this Chapter shall be applied by a judge to all court users, involved in the case, equally.

Chapter V

Communication between Marshal and Court user

Article 15. General provision

Marshal-court user communication shall be carried out in accordance with the rules stipulated under Chapter II, in consideration of the changes and amendments provided for under this Chapter.

Article 16. Marshal-court user communication

1. By his/her conduct and manner of conversation a marshal shall win court user's respect and favor and not intimidation and stress.
2. A marshal shall diligently treat court user's any request and question, show him/her the way to a courtroom, introduce to a competent officer, if necessary give help in movement.
3. If a court user looks confused, marshal shall offer his/her help (..May I help you?.. Do you need anything?).

Chapter VI

General Appearance Standard

Article 17. General provisions

1. The regulations under this Chapter shall apply to judges and marshals only to the extent not regulated under the special legislation.
2. An officer shall try to create pleasant and effective working environment. By his/her appearance s/he shall meet the high standard of court officer's responsibility.

Article 18. Clothing

1. It is recommended for an officer to dress classically (classical style jacket, suit, tie, shirt, skirt etc.).
2. An officer shall dress plainly, elegantly and with taste. Inappropriate, provoking, vulgar, avant-garde and/or eccentric dressing shall be forbidden.
3. Business style shall not be mixed with other styles (e.g. sports, home style etc.).
4. An officer shall avoid dressing in too many colors. Preferably maximum four colors shall be present in the clothing. At least one out of these four colors shall be neutral (black or white tones (cream, milk)). Black, grey, brown, white and/or navy shall be the recommended colors.
5. Wearing of clothing depicting abusive expressions, vulgar pictures and/or caricatures shall be forbidden.
6. Both females and males shall not wear short pants.
7. A female officer shall not wear deep-low-cut and above-the-knee dresses.
8. Female officers shall not wear deep-low-cut blouses.
9. It is recommended for male officers to wear a tie.
10. Clothing shall not be made of jeans.
11. An officer shall hide the tattooed and/or pierced places of his/her body with clothes.

Article 19. Shoes and accessories

1. An officer shall wear brown, black or other dark color shoes and single-tone socks.
2. An officer shall select accessories with taste and to its practical purpose (e.g. hat, gloves, handbag, bracelet, necklace etc.)
3. Wearing of a hat, cap or other head-dress inside the court building shall be forbidden, except for justified exceptions.

Article 20. Personal care

1. An officer shall take care of his/her hair and nails.

2. An officer shall select his/her daily perfumery and cosmetics with taste and use it moderately to avoid irritation of other officers and court users.

Chapter VI  
Special appearance standard ([dress code](#))

Article 21. General provisions

1. The regulations of Chapter V shall apply to the special appearance standard, in consideration of the changes and amendments provided for under this Chapter.
2. Special appearance standard shall apply to all officers who establish communication with court users on regular basis and in a direct manner (e.g. secretary, assistant, reception staff, probationer etc.)
3. Special appearance standard shall not apply to judges and marshals.

Article 22. Clothing

1. An officer shall dress classically (classical style jacket, suit, tie, shirt, skirt etc.).
2. A secretary shall wear in the courtroom white color or classical style blouse or shirt.
3. A male officer shall wear a tie.

Article 23. Officer's name badge

1. An officer shall wear a name badge.
2. Officer's first and last name and position shall be indicated on officer's name badge.

Annex 1

Electronic letter template

Dear Sir/Madam,  
  
...(The text of the reply, or notification (notice), or message...  
  
Sincerely,  
  
Your first and last name  
  
Name of the court  
  
Position  
  
Office Tel: court telephone number (extension)  
  
Working hours: 09:30 – 18:00  
  
Court's website  
  
Court emblem

Sample:

Dear Ms. Nino,  
  
In reply to your question I would like to inform you that a counterclaim may not be presented at the appellate stage of the proceedings (article 381 of the Civil Procedure Code).  
  
In case of need please do not hesitate to contact me on any issue concerning the administration of the court and civil proceedings.  
  
Sincerely,  
  
Giorgi Ingorokva  
  
Tbilisi Appellate Court  
  
Assistant to the Judge Davit Cholokashvili  
  
Office Tel: (995 32) 53 09 14 (925)  
  
Working hours: 09:30 – 18:00  
  
<http://www.tbappeal.court.gov.ge/>