

Etiquette Tips When Using the National Relay Service (NRS)

The National Relay Service (NRS)

The NRS operates as a communication bridge to enable people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have speech communication impairments and who use a TTY to communicate with hearing persons using a telephone via standard telephone service.

Telephone calls that are made through the National Relay Service (NRS) follow similar etiquette as having a telephone conversation. The only difference is that there is a third party involved. This person is an operator known as the Relay Officer (RO) or the Communication Assistant (CA). To access the National Relay Service number by state, dial 711.

The Relay Service is strictly confidential. All calls are kept private and there are no records of any conversations maintained. An RO/CA will not share the contents of any relay call, unless they are required to do so by state or federal law.

Customer Communication Options:

The Relay Service provides optional ways to handle a call. When communicating with an RO/CA, you may request one of the following:

- Ask the RO/CA to type and speak exactly what is said. The operator will reproduce the exact conversation.
- Ask the RO/CA not to announce your call. The RO/CA will not ask the called party if he or she has ever received a relay call and will not explain the services.
- Request the operator to use Voice Carry-Over. This service provides direct communication when callers who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech/communication impairments prefer to use their own voice or hearing.
- Request a Spanish-speaking Relay Operator. TTY users can type in Spanish and the conversations will be relayed in Spanish to the called party. TTY users can also request Spanish to English or English to Spanish translations via relay. To access this service, dial 711 as for all relay services and instruct the relay operator how you want your relay call translated.

Etiquette Tips:

- Type or speak as if you were talking directly to the person. Speak as if the RO/CA is not there. Don't say, "Tell him/her" to the RO/CA. If you need to leave a message, indicate that you called through the Relay Service.
- Do not engage in personal conversation with the RO/CA about the person you are calling.

For example: If you would like to know the “emotion” of the person you are calling and you ask the operator “Did he/she sound mad or happy?” The RO/CA will not tell you and, in fact, will relay what you asked to the person you called.

How to Use the Relay Service for Hearing Persons:

- Dial 711 to obtain the access number for the relay service in your state
- Tell the RO/CA the telephone number of the person you want to call
- As the call is relayed, talk as though you are speaking directly to the person you are calling
- On a relay call, only one person can speak at a time. Say “Go Ahead” at the end of your response to let the other person know it is his/her turn to respond.

How to Use the Relay Service for Deaf Persons:

- Dial 711 to obtain the access number for the relay service in your state
- Tell the RO/CA the telephone number of the person you want to call and whether or not you are using Voice Carry-Over (VCO)
- As the call is being relayed, type into TTY or speak as though you are speaking directly to the person you are calling
- On a relay call, only one person can speak/type at a time. Say or type “Go Ahead” or “GA” at the end of your response to let the other person know it is his/her turn to respond.

Note:

For your protection, calls cannot be placed to 900 #'s or any other numbers that charge by the minute.

Use of the relay service is FREE of charge! You only pay for the cost of the call.

T	= TTY/TDD
V	= Voice
NRS	= National Relay Service
TTY	= Teletypewriter
RO	= Relay Operator
CA	= Communication Assistant
VCO	= Voice Carry-Over