



Virginia Relay is a public service offered by the Commonwealth of Virginia that allows businesses, private citizens and public agencies to communicate by telephone with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind or speech disabled and unable to use a standard telephone. TTY (text telephone) callers initiate seventy-five percent of the calls that come through Virginia Relay daily.

### Receiving calls from Relay customers

1. When answering your telephone at work, it may be a call placed through Virginia Relay. You will hear a Virginia Relay Communications Assistant (CA) say, "Hello, Virginia Relay CA 2643."
2. If you ask "Who?" or "What?", the CA will explain how Virginia Relay works.
3. If you say "Go Ahead," the call will proceed with the CA voicing everything to you that the deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-disabled customer types on his/her TTY. Everything that you say will be typed back to the TTY user's device. The CA will continue relaying the messages back and forth until both you and the other party are finished with the conversation.
4. Remember to say "Go Ahead" or "GA" after each thought. When the CA says, "Go Ahead," back to you, it is your turn to respond.

\*See section on "Tips" for smooth call handling on page 2

### Making Relay calls to customers

1. Dial 7-1-1 (in Virginia) or 1-800-828-1120 (anywhere).
2. When a Relay CA answers, give the 10-digit number of the customer you want to reach.
3. Once the customer answers, proceed with the call as you would with a regular phone call.
4. Remember to say "Go Ahead" or "GA" after each thought. When the CA says, "Go Ahead," back to you, it is your turn to respond.

\*See section on "Tips" for smooth call handling

## Virginia Relay Communication Assistants follow a strict code of confidentiality and ethics

Be assured that all Virginia Relay Communications Assistants abide by a code of ethics. A federal requirement mandates that all calls are kept confidential and information cannot be used for personal gain. CAs must remain impartial and no records whatsoever of the call are kept.

### Tips for successful calls

✓ **When Virginia Relay calls, don't hang up.**

The person calling you is a deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-disabled customer, using Virginia Relay to contact your business by telephone.

✓ **Say "Go Ahead" or "GA" after each thought.**

Remember that the CA must type everything you say, so try to speak clearly and slowly. It is not necessary to speak loud. When the CA says "Go Ahead" to you, it's your turn to respond.

✓ **Speak directly to the customer, not to the Virginia Relay CA.**

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

✓ **The Relay CA will type everything that is heard.**

To ensure equal access, CAs will type everything they hear, including background noise and voice intonation. Your words will be typed exactly as you say them.

✓ **Be patient.**

Virginia Relay calls take a few minutes longer than regular calls. Keep in mind, your time may be valuable, but so is your customer.

### Customers may use different Virginia Relay features

**A. Traditional Relay**

An option for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and wish to use a TTY (text telephone) to make Relay calls. With a traditional Relay call, the CA voices the TTY user's text and types the words of the standard phone user, relaying the conversation back and forth.

**B. VCO (Voice Carry-Over)**

An option for a person with hearing loss and understandable speech, who chooses to speak for themselves using a specially designed telephone with a display screen. The voice you hear will be that of the customer, but the CA will type your side of the conversation to him/her.

**C. HCO (Hearing Carry-Over)**

A person with a speech disability who can hear your responses may type his/her side of the conversation, with the CA voicing it to you.

**D. STS (Speech-To-Speech)**

A speech-disabled individual using a standard telephone calls a specially designated Relay number (1-800-229-5746), and uses his/her own voice while the CA listens carefully and repeats what is said to the other party. The customer will hear your responses.

**E. VRS Video Relay Service**

With this option, sign language users can communicate by phone in their natural language via video conferencing technology. VRS uses the Internet for an audio/video link to a certified video interpreter who then relays the conversation between video of the sign language user and the person using a standard telephone.

**F. Internet Relay\***

Allows people to make Relay calls anytime, from anywhere, using their computer, Web phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or any other Internet-capable device.

**G. Businesses, Families and Friends**

Anyone who wants to contact a TTY user may call Virginia Relay from their standard telephone. No extra equipment is needed.

\* Note: The advent of new Relay technologies, like Internet Relay, has made some businesses more vulnerable to fraudulent phone transactions. When conducting sales transactions through Relay, be sure to follow the same identification and credit card verification processes that you would with a standard phone user.

*Fact: Virginia Relay CAs process thousands of calls per month, with hundreds of those calls taking place each business day. CAs are paid professionals, doing their job just like you.*