

Telephone calls

(A resource for community advice offices and community-based paralegals brought to you by NADCAO, from the Paralegal Manual published by the Education and Training Unit and the Black Sash.)

Before you make a telephone call, you must make sure that you understand clearly what the problem is about and what you hope to get out of the telephone call. In other words, you must prepare yourself properly before making the telephone call.

Always introduce yourself to the other person. Tell the person you are telephoning on behalf of your client.

Always write down the name of the person to whom you are speaking, and the date and time of the telephone call.

Never change the story of your client. You must only say what your client told you. If you don't know how to answer the other person, say that you must speak to your client again and you will telephone again.

Be polite but firm about your client's rights and never lose your temper over the phone. Try not to become involved in an argument on the telephone, because you might end up saying things that could harm your client.

Make rough notes while you are speaking on the telephone, then write them down in more detail as soon as you have finished. This is because it is not always possible to remember everything that was said on the telephone. You might have to remember the details later for a court case.

If you reach any agreement with the other person, you must confirm what you agreed in a letter to that person.

Finding a telephone number or address in a telephone directory

All telephone books work in ALPHABETICAL ORDER.

All **government departments for national and provincial sphere**, are listed at the back of the telephone directory. The government departments are listed alphabetically. If there is no number for the department you want in your regional telephone directory, phone 1023 and get the number of the nearest office.

Metropolitan councils and their departments are also listed at the back of the telephone directory, for example, the Western Cape directory will have contact details of the Cape Town Metropolitan Council and its departments.

Areas that fall outside the metropolitan areas are not listed at the back of the telephone directory with the other government departments. They are listed under 'M' alphabetically with all the other telephone numbers in the directory.

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For example, the municipal council for Mtubatuba is listed under 'M' for municipality in the telephone directory for that area.

All **hospitals** are listed under 'H' with all the other numbers in the directory. The hospitals are then listed alphabetically under 'H'. **Doctors** are listed under 'Medical' alphabetically by name.

All **emergency service numbers** are listed on one of the first few pages at the front of the directory. If you are using a directory which has many different towns listed in it, then the emergency numbers for each town will appear at the beginning of each of the towns.