
CWA Issue Brief

Protections on Adherence, Talk Time, Guarantees of Offline “Closed Key” Time

CWA Goals

Call center employers abuse the technology that distributes and tracks customer contacts to track employees’ every second at work, including time on and offline, adherence to one’s schedule (even when this means cutting off a customer contact), average work time (AWT), average handle time (AHT), customer serving time (CST), among other measures. Employers use this data to speed up the workload, squeeze out any free minutes to do offline work, and pressure employees to emphasize quantity over quality service. The result of these control measures is a highly stressful work environment, high rates of absenteeism, turnover, and stress-related illness as well as frustrated customers with negative impact on the business. (See also “CWA Negotiated Protections against Abusive Monitoring”)

CWA has negotiated protections to ensure that customer service employees are not punished for taking the time to do a quality job. Such provisions include:

- Protections against discipline for failure to meet adherence and other time measures
- No denial of transfer for failure to meet adherence and other time measures
- Guaranteed closed time to do off-line paperwork or call backs

Protections in CWA Contracts

Verizon Mid-Atlantic

Protections against Discipline: The Company cannot discipline any experienced operator solely on the basis of average work time (AWT).

Closed Key Time: Employees are guaranteed 30 minutes of closed time per day per scheduled Consultant that works on line the entire day on Tuesdays through Saturdays, excluding the first business day after a holiday

Verizon Northeast

Closed Key Time: Employees are guaranteed 30 minutes of closed time per day per scheduled Consultant that works on line the entire day on Tuesdays through Saturdays, excluding the first business day after a holiday.

AT&T Southwest

Protections against Discipline: Adherence may not be used as a sole basis for determining performance or providing incentives. Average Handling Time (AHT) measures cannot be used to discipline an employee or to compare individuals and cannot be made public. For Operators, feedback associated with Customer Serving Time (CST) and Queue Management Information Systems (QMIS) cannot be used for discipline.

Protections Against and Denial of Transfer: An employee deficient solely in AHT shall still be recommended for transfer. Operators that perform unsatisfactorily on these measures shall still be

recommended for transfer to another job title. *Closed Key Time*: Employees are guaranteed 30 minutes of closed key time twice per week. If additional time is needed, management will approve the additional needed time within 24 hours or will reassign the work. (The protections in this section do not apply to service representatives in the leveraged title.)

AT&T East

Protections against Discipline and Denial of Transfer: Operators cannot be disciplined solely on AWT (Average Work Time) performance. Service representatives cannot be disciplined or performance managed based on time measures and adherence.

Closed Key Time: Employees are guaranteed 30 minutes closed key time every day, Tuesday through Saturday.

AT&T Southeast

Closed Key Time: Customer Service employees are guaranteed 15 minutes of closed key time per day. Small Business Services and Collections employees are guaranteed one hour of closed key time per week.

AT&T Legacy T

Protections against Discipline: Operators cannot be disciplined on the basis of average work time and average call handle time.

FairPoint

Closed Key Time: The Company will target 30 minutes of closed key time per day for each Representative, contingent on the work load of the center.