



Georgia Relay Partner Guide

www.GeorgiaRelay.org

 Georgia Relay Partner
Dial 7-1-1

Welcome to Georgia Relay Partner

As a Georgia Relay Partner, you can make an important commitment to staying connected to the thousands of Georgia residents who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking. This guide will prepare you to take Georgia Relay calls—and turn Georgia Relay users into valuable lifelong customers.

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Not a Georgia Relay Partner? Join Today!

Sign up now and start enjoying the incredible business benefits of reaching the Georgia Relay user community. Visit GeorgiaRelay.org and click on Relay Partner Program to complete an easy, online sign-up form. Call 1-866-694-5824 or email garelay@hamiltonrelay.com for personal assistance.

What Is Georgia Relay?

Georgia Relay is a FREE public service that helps people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking communicate over the phone.

When people who have difficulty hearing or speaking make a Relay call, they primarily use one of four methods: Traditional TTY Relay (text telephone), Internet Relay, Captioned Telephone (CapTel®) or Video Relay Service (VRS). In general, the Relay user types or signs his or her side of the conversation, which is vocalized verbatim to the hearing party by a specially trained Communication Assistant (CA). When the hearing party speaks, the CA then types or signs the message back to the Relay user. There are no worries about information that is shared, because, by law, the entire conversation must be kept confidential.

Georgia Relay may be accessed from any phone, anywhere, any time, simply by dialing 7-1-1. Either party may initiate calls, and receiving a call is as simple as answering your telephone. There are no set-up fees or costs for local calls.

History

For those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking, the standard telephone is often a barrier to communication. In 1990, Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act required that there be a telecommunications relay service put into place in each state to remove this communication barrier. Georgia Relay, a public service administered by the Georgia Public Service Commission, satisfies this mandate. After a competitive bidding process, the State of Georgia selected Hamilton Relay as the service provider for Georgia Relay.

Your Connection to More Customers

Businesses unfamiliar with Georgia Relay often hang up on Relay calls, mistaking the Communication Assistant (CA) for a solicitor or marketer. The calls sound similar, with a short pause, but the CA will quickly speak on behalf of the Relay caller.

By familiarizing yourself with Georgia Relay calls, you can make your business accessible to customers who have difficulty hearing or speaking, and re-establish contact with customers who have stopped using the telephone due to progressive hearing loss—all valuable opportunities to gain new customers and make new sales.

More Incredible Benefits for Your Business

As a Georgia Relay Partner, your contact information will be listed in our online Partner directory, letting the thousands of Georgians who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking know that your company welcomes their calls—and their business. Georgia Relay users are encouraged through Georgia Relay to patronize your business, and your information will be available on user search queries. Learn about additional business benefits and support on page 9.

Types of Relay Calls

Traditional Relay (TTY)

Traditional Relay callers use a TTY (text telephone) device that has a typewriter-style keyboard and text screen. A call is initiated by dialing 7-1-1 to reach Georgia Relay. The TTY user types in what they would like to say, and a Communication Assistant (CA) reads the message to you. When you speak, the CA types out your message for the TTY user to read.

When participating in a traditional Relay call, it is important for you to remember to speak slowly and clearly, as the CA must type what you are saying. However, you should keep in mind that the CA is not a part of the conversation and will not acknowledge you if you speak to them. You should talk directly to the customer as if the CA is not there.



VCO (Voice Carry-Over)

VCO enables Relay users who can speak clearly to speak directly to you, and then read your response on the screen of a TTY or VCO phone. The CA serves as the VCO user's "ears" and types the response for the VCO user to read.

HCO (Hearing Carry-Over)

Ideal for individuals who can hear but have limited to no speech capabilities, HCO allows Relay users to listen directly to your words, and then type their responses back using a TTY or HCO phone. The CA serves as the "voice" for the HCO user by reading aloud everything that is typed.

STS (Speech-To-Speech)

STS gives Relay users who have difficulty speaking the ability to speak for themselves during a telephone call. A specially trained CA will listen and then repeat as needed and/or requested what the STS user is saying word for word.

Spanish Relay

Georgia Relay makes it easy for Spanish-speaking TTY, VCO, HCO and STS users and hearing callers to communicate by phone in Spanish. Spanish Relay includes both Spanish-to-Spanish and English-to-Spanish translations.

Captioned Telephone (CapTel®)

CapTel allows individuals who are hard of hearing to listen to their callers' words, while simultaneously reading captions on an easy-to-read screen. For you, there will be no difference between a CapTel call and a typical telephone call—you will talk directly to the caller and the caller will talk directly to you. However, behind the scenes, a Captioning Assistant uses voice recognition technology to transcribe everything you say into captions for the CapTel caller.

VRS (Video Relay Service)

VRS allows Relay users to communicate with sign language using a videophone or device with a video camera and high-speed Internet connection. The VRS CA relays the conversation back and forth between both parties—sign language with the VRS user, voice with you—with no typing or text involved.

With VRS, conversation flows instantaneously between callers. Parties can interrupt each other and interject, instead of having to take turns. Because the conversation flows naturally, calls take place more quickly than with a traditional Relay call.

For a list of VRS provicers, please visit www.fcc.gov.

Internet Relay

Internet Relay allows users to make Relay calls using their computer, web device or wireless device. A CA facilitates the conversation just like a TTY call. Internet Relay also supports text and instant messaging.

For a list of Internet Relay providers, please visit www.fcc.gov.

Telecommunications Equipment Program

The Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (GATEDP) provides financially and medically qualified applicants with free specialized telecommunications equipment and training. GATEDP is administered by the Georgia Public Service Commission and managed, under contract to the Commission, by the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI). For more information, call 1-888-297-9461 (Voice/TTY) or visit www.gachi.org.



Placing & Receiving Relay Calls

Receiving Calls from Relay Customers

1. A call placed through Georgia Relay will begin with the Communication Assistant (CA) identifying the call and giving their CA number – “Hello, Georgia Relay CA 2643.”
2. If you are unfamiliar with Relay, the CA will explain how Georgia Relay works.
3. The call will proceed with the CA voicing everything to you that the Relay user types or signs. When it is your turn to speak, speak slowly and directly to the caller, not the CA. Each time you are finished speaking, say “Go Ahead.” The CA will then type or sign everything you said back to the customer.
4. The CA will continue relaying the messages back and forth until both you and the customer are finished with the conversation.



Placing Calls to Relay Customers

1. Dial 7-1-1 or 1-800-255-0135 (voice) to reach Georgia Relay.
2. Give the CA the telephone number of the customer you wish to call.
3. Once the CA has connected you, your conversation will proceed.

Placing Calls to Video Relay Service (VRS) Customers

Dial the VRS customer's area code and phone number, just like a traditional phone call. The customer's number will automatically be routed through the VRS provider center. Once connected, a CA will relay your conversation back and forth.

Placing and Receiving Calls with CapTel Customers

When placing and receiving CapTel calls, there's no need to wait for cues from a CA. The customer listens and responds directly to you. However, it is important to ask your customer how best to reach him or her in the event you need to call back.

In some cases, the customer may indicate to directly dial his or her phone number, while in other cases, the customer may indicate to first dial the CapTel captioning center (1-877-243-2823) and, when prompted, enter his or her phone number.

Long-Distance Charges

Long-distance and international calls will be placed by the CA and billed to the caller's designated phone service carrier according to his or her selected rate plan.

Resolving Relay Customer Care Concerns

As a Georgia Relay user, you have control of the call. This means that if you are not satisfied with the CA for any reason, you may ask for another CA, or ask to speak to a supervisor. You do not have to offer any explanations for the request. Whenever receiving or placing a Relay call, it is helpful to write down the CA's number, date and time of the call. The CA handling your call should give you his or her CA number at the beginning and end of each call. In order to maintain confidentiality and transparency, CAs will never divulge their names. By recording the CA's number, you will be able to provide valuable feedback, should it be necessary. It is recommended that you take care of any concerns you have while you are on the phone with Georgia Relay.

PBX (Private Branch Exchange) System Compatibility

Many office buildings use a centralized phone system called a Private Branch Exchange (PBX). PBX systems typically need to be reprogrammed to permit 7-1-1 dialing—a simple procedure that can be performed by the telecommunications or PBX coordinator of your building.

Confidentiality and Ethics

Be assured that all Georgia Relay CAs abide by a strict code of confidentiality and 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.

How a Relay Call Works:



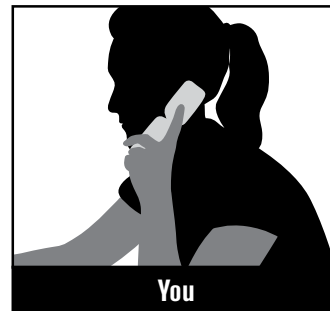
Relay Caller

The Relay caller places a call through Georgia Relay, typically through the use of an assistive communication device.



Communication Assistant

A Communication Assistant (CA) speaks and/or types what is said between you and the Relay caller.



You

Speak as you normally would, just a little slower. Say "Go Ahead" when you are ready for a response.

Calling Tips

Just dial 7-1-1 to make a Relay call.

To make a Georgia Relay call, just dial 7-1-1 from anywhere in Georgia. If you're traveling out of state, connect with Georgia Relay toll-free at 1-800-833-7833 (voice) or 1-800-833-5833 (TTY).

When Georgia Relay calls, don't hang up.

Calls placed through Georgia Relay can sound similar to a telemarketing or solicitation call. Both have short pauses when you pick up—but on a Georgia Relay call, the Communication Assistant (CA) will quickly speak on behalf of a Relay caller who wants to do business with you.

Speak slowly and clearly.

When the CA says "Go Ahead," to you, it's your turn to respond. Remember that the majority of Relay calls require the CA to type what you say, so speak slowly and clearly. It is not necessary to speak loudly.

Speak directly to your customer, not the CA.

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

Say "Go Ahead" when you are ready for a response.

This signals to the CA that you have finished your thought and it is the Relay user's turn to respond.

The CA will type everything that is heard.

To ensure equal access, the CA will type or sign everything that he or she hears, including background noises and voice intonations. Your words will be typed or signed exactly as you say them.

Be patient.

Georgia Relay calls take a few minutes longer than regular calls. Keep in mind, your time is valuable, and so are your Relay customers!

Know your customers' Relay preferences.

Not all Relay calls may come through Georgia Relay. VRS and Internet Relay calls will come through your customers' service providers. Be sure to ask your customers which type of Relay service they prefer you use when contacting them.

Be aware of language differences.

Many people who are deaf use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. This is a visual language that is not based on standard English, so messages typed on a TTY by ASL users may not translate well into written or spoken English. If you are having trouble understanding the content of a Relay conversation, ask the CA for an ASL translator, who will translate the ASL user's typed words into standard English for you. He or she will also translate your words back into ASL for the Relay user.

Frequently Asked Questions

How did people who are deaf communicate with businesses before Relay services were mandated by law?

Before Relay services were established in 1990, people who were deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or had difficulty speaking had to rely on neighbors or family members to make phone calls for them. Relay was an important step towards independence and equity with the phone system.

How does a person who is deaf know when the telephone is ringing?

A person who is deaf is alerted to a ringing telephone by a light flashing system that can be installed in his or her home or office.

What is the difference between a TDD, TTY and TT?

TDD, TTY and TT are three different acronyms for the same assistive text telephone device. The commonly used acronym for the device is TTY.

What is a TTY?

Looking much like a typewriter keypad with a text screen, a TTY allows persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or have difficulty speaking to make a telephone call. The conversation is read on a lighted display screen and/or paper printout.

What is VRS?

VRS stands for Video Relay Service. Simply put, VRS allows for a person who uses sign language to communicate with a hearing person over the phone. The person who signs is connected to a professionally trained interpreter via Video Relay, and the interpreter is connected to the hearing person being called via telephone.

My business has a dedicated TTY phone number. Why do I still get Relay calls?

The TTY or VRS user may choose to call the business any way they wish. It is often reported that when calling a dedicated TTY line, it may be answered by a machine or by a person who doesn't know how to use the equipment. For this reason, a TTY user may find that by calling the business's voice line, they get an immediate response, rather than having to wait for a return call.

I forgot to get the phone number of a customer calling my business through Georgia Relay. Can I call the CA back to get that number?

Unfortunately, you cannot call a CA back. To assure confidentiality of all calls, no records are kept. Once the call is dropped, there is no way to retrieve that information.

Preventing Relay Fraud

Unfortunately, from time to time criminals pose as Relay callers in order to conceal their identity and order goods and services using stolen or fake credit card numbers and counterfeit cashier's checks. Georgia Relay and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are taking steps to prevent the misuse of Relay, however, you can help keep your business safe with these simple guidelines.

Follow These Rules For All Transactions:

- Always confirm the buyer's full name, address and telephone number
- Credit Card Payments: Ensure that the credit card is valid and the user is authorized before ending the call if possible
- Check Payments: Ask for a check drawn at a local bank, or a bank with a local branch, and never accept a check for more than your selling price
- Wire Transfers: If the buyer insists that you wire back funds, end the transaction immediately

Be Alert for Callers Who:

- Refuse to identify themselves or their company
- Refuse to provide a phone number
- Order large quantities, possibly "whatever you have in stock"
- Have little knowledge about the product, or don't ask common questions
- Have no concern for price

- Want the order shipped immediately through a third party and/or to an overseas location
- Use multiple credit cards, sometimes with numbers that are close together
- Cannot provide a three-digit credit card verification code
- Wish to pay with a certified check (always wait until funds are cleared before shipping)
- Refuse to wire money directly to you
- Pressure you to "act now" on the sale

Report All Crimes and Suspicious Calls

If you feel you have been a victim of Relay fraud, or have received a suspicious Relay call, please document the call and report it immediately to Georgia Relay and the Federal Trade Commission at www.FTC.gov or 1-877-FTC-HELP.



Marketing Your Business to Relay Users

Being a Georgia Relay Partner is something to be proud of. We've created a number of FREE materials you can use to help you share the good news with your customers, prospective customers and employees.

Employee Guide

Duplicate and distribute this guide to new and existing employees as part of your employee training program to ensure that all employees are prepared to place and receive Relay calls.

Contributed Article

Announce your company's membership in Georgia Relay Partner with our customizable Contributed Article. Insert your company name, contact person's name and email address/phone number into this Word document and add it to your company newsletter.

Calling Tips and Relay Fraud Prevention Flyers

Post these flyers throughout your workplace to remind employees how to handle Relay calls and potential fraudulent callers.

Partner Decal & Certificate

Display these in your business to let customers know that you are a proud Georgia Relay Partner.

Online Business Listing

Your business contact information will be listed in Georgia Relay's online partner directory. Georgia Relay users are encouraged to patronize businesses listed in this directory, and your information will be available on user search queries.



Request Additional Materials

Many of these materials should be included in your training kit. If you would like to request any of the materials listed here, simply contact Georgia Relay Customer Care at 1-866-694-5824 or garelay@hamiltonrelay.com.

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Visit GeorgiaRelay.org to complete an easy, online sign-up form. Or call 1-866-694-5824 or garelay@hamiltonrelay.com for personal assistance.



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