



National Data Center – Calling Standards

Rules of Contact

- Scroll to the bottom of the dial screen to read all record level comments.
- All phone numbers on the dial screen should be attempted.
- All partners should be contacted.
- All phone numbers in comments should be attempted.
- If someone other than the operator answers and the operator is not available, ask that person (spouse, son, etc.) if they would be able to assist with the [Survey name] report. If possible, complete the interview. On the last page of the interview record their name as the person completing the interview.

Standard Introduction

'Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. This is [name] calling on behalf of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.' **Based on their response you must formulate your approach. NASDA prefers the following:** How are you today? We are currently collecting information on the [Survey name] report. Would you have a few minutes to assist? Thank you again for taking a few minutes with me today and I wanted to let you know this call will be monitored and recorded'.

On every call you MUST say, 'This call will be monitored or recorded'.

NOTE: All survey data collected is confidential. Surveys conducted by NASS are either voluntary and/or mandatory. Survey training will highlight which category. Interviews are intended to be conversation style, mentioning of survey data being confidential or voluntary/mandatory will depend on the flow of your survey.

Standard Voicemail

'Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. This is [name] calling on behalf of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. Sorry we missed you we will try again later.'

- Voicemail should be left on first dial attempt.
- Leave a Voicemail message on each number that appears on the dial screen.
- On the Call Completion Screen in READI code the call as Voicemail. Leave a note.

Abbreviations are allowed only as indicated below.

- VM LM = Voicemail Left Message
- VM unable to leave LM = Voicemail unable to Leave Message
- VM full = Voicemail was full and could not leave a message

A screenshot of the 'Call Completion' interface. At the top, the title 'Call Completion' is displayed. Below it is a dropdown menu with 'Voicemail' selected. Underneath is a 'Notes' section with a text area containing the following text: 'VM LM', 'VM unable to leave LM', and 'VM full'. At the bottom of the interface is a red button with a white icon and the text 'Complete Call'.

- A second Voicemail will be left when 3 days remain in that survey's data collection period. (Exceptions will be communicated depending on the length of the survey.)

Message:

'Good *[morning/afternoon/evening]*. This is *[name]* calling on behalf of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA. Sorry we missed you again. With only a few days left

in the data collection period for our *[Survey name]* report if you wish to report please call 1/888 424-7828.'

Standard Abbreviations

- Approved
 - VM LM = Voicemail Left Message
 - VM unable to leave LM = Voicemail unable to Leave Message
 - VM full = Voicemail was full and could not leave a message
- Not Approved
 - Everything else.
 - Spell out when tempted to abbreviate
 - Spell out Wrong Number, Not in Service, Do not Call, etc.

Format of Comments left on Dial Screen

- [Date] [Comment] [Initial]
- Example: '3/20 Wife cannot answer. JR'

Disconnect Procedures

- All numbers listed on a record should be attempted including those phone numbers that appear in comments.
- If ALL numbers have been disconnected the record will appear on the Disconnect Listing and researched by the NDC Disconnect Team.
 - If a dial result is 'Not in Service' code as a disconnect.
- If multiple phone numbers are available for a record, call each number. If one of those numbers has been disconnected the READI system will prompt you to code that one number as a disconnect. The record will now appear with a red circle and x indicating that number has been disconnected. The other available phone number(s) for that record should still be called, and data collection should continue.

Fast Busy

- Fast busy is not common when using Zoom.
- If this occurs it means the network could not establish a connection. This is normally temporary.
- Code the record as 'No Answer'. And leave a note '3/20 Number ending in 1234 comes back as fast busy JR'.
- The record should be called 3 more times over a period of 3 days then coded as a 'Disconnect'.

Pick-Up Hang-Up

- Someone answers the phone and hangs up.
 - Callback one time with this standard message: 'I am sorry I think our call may have been disconnected.' Continue with the standard introduction. If they hang-up again code as a refusal.
 - Do NOT call back a 3rd time.

Inaccessible Records

- Coding calls as inaccessible should be limited.
- Only code as inaccessible if the operator is unavailable for the entire survey period.
- If coding of records inaccessible becomes excessive you will be required to get Coach approval before coding a record as such.

Out of Business

- Comments are required for all Out-of-Business operations.
- Do not ever promise to remove someone from the list.

Phone Number Outside of United States

- Zoom will not allow you to call records outside of the United States.
- A message will appear saying 'Unlicensed for this country'.
- Code all such records as a 'Refusal'.

Address Verification

- Be sure to verify the address, phone number and email listed for the operator and any partners when you first open a survey on the Address Verification Page.