



Superintendencia
de Bancos de Panamá

TRANSLATION

June 24, 2020
Circular N° SBP-DJ-0219-2020

General Manager

Subject: COVID-19 Quality in banking customer service

Dear General Manager:

Due to the State of National Emergency because of the COVID-19 pandemic, decreed by Cabinet Resolution 11, dated 13 March 2020, the Republic of Panama is facing an economic impact which affects the normal financial performance of a significant number of customers of the Panamanian banking system. In this context, the Superintendency has emphasized to banks on the importance of quality in customer service and of the sensitized and empathetic treatment towards them, either through call centers or online channels or through face-to-face service for inquiries, processes and claims.

It is an opportunity to highlight the healthy balance that must exist in any contractual relationship between the bank and the customer. In turn, we reiterate the provisions of Article 192 and 193 of the Banking Law, regarding the banks' obligation of providing their services to bank customers with transparency, integrity and equity and to be diligent in answering inquiries and requests from the bank customer to know the status of their obligations.

Banks must clearly and diligently attend to information requirements and requests submitted by bank customers, particularly of those who, because of the State of National Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the deterioration or impairment of their regular income, require the application of grace periods, extensions or modifications to their loans, in order to honor their obligations in accordance with their new financial reality.

We urge banks that when applying grace periods, extensions or loan modifications for the benefit of the customers economically affected by COVID-19 to clearly explain them the aspects involved in the measure applied, so that they are aware of and understand the new terms and conditions.

As mandate of Law, the Superintendency is responsible for ensuring the legal balance between the banking system and its customers, imposing the corresponding sanctions for breaching banking rules and regulations, as well as ensuring that banks provide their customers with information that guarantee the greatest transparency in banking operations. In this regard, we will redouble the supervision of compliance with the special rules contained in the law and banking rules, regarding the bank client and his/her rights, and the obligations of the banks with them.

We will highly appreciate your informing your staff of these instructions, in order to comply with this circular.

Best regards,

Amauri A. Castillo
Superintendent

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"Velando por la solidez del Centro Bancario Internacional"