

Position statement

Managing unacceptable customer behaviour

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Position statement LIT 10503

We are committed to providing a professional and fair service to everyone we work with and our Customer Service Commitment sets out what customers can expect from us. In return we ask that customers respect our staff.

We won't tolerate threatening, abusive or violent behaviour. Under these circumstances no member of staff should be required to or feel obliged to deal with any customer either face to face, over the phone or in correspondence.

About this position statement

This position statement enables us to deal with unacceptable customer behaviour, professionally, consistently and fairly. It lets both staff and customers know what we consider to be unacceptable and outlines the steps we may take to deal with such behaviour. It applies to all our customers.

What behaviour is unacceptable?

For the purposes of this position statement, unacceptable behaviour is defined as:

Behaviour or language (written, verbal or online) that we consider may cause staff to feel intimidated, afraid, offended, threatened or abused.

Examples of this include (but are not exhaustive):

- **Communication** that we consider to be unreasonably demanding, or unreasonably persistent in its frequency, type and nature. By this we mean face to face, telephone online or through social media.
- **Inflammatory/derogatory statements**, remarks of a racial, xenophobia or discriminatory nature and unsubstantiated allegations.
- **Violent behaviour** - Physical contact made in an aggressive or threatening manner. This includes: pushing; jostling; kicking; punching; physical restraint; sexual assault; spitting and use of weapons
- **Threatening behaviour** - Words or actions that cause a person to be concerned for their safety, the safety of colleagues, or the safety of their property. This includes visual threats or gestures; aggressive stance; sexually explicit or threatening language or body language; abusive phone calls; on-line bullying, use of aggressive dogs and obstruction or aggressive use of vehicles.
- **Abusive behaviour** - Words or actions that cause a person to feel harassed, intimidated or distressed. This includes: offensive gestures; aggressive stance; abusive, provocative or obscene language and inappropriate use of social media.
- **Wilful damage to property** - This can belong to the Environment Agency, its employees, contractors, or volunteers. This includes: buildings; fixtures; fittings; equipment and vehicles.

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What action will we take?

Our position on threatening or violent behaviour, racism or xenophobia is very simple: zero tolerance. We will not tolerate it inside our organisation, and we won't tolerate it against our staff from people outside the organisation. If we feel that a customers' behaviour is unacceptable we will take the following steps:

Step 1	Identify	Customer behaviour is recognised as unacceptable We will ask the customer to modify their behaviour and explain why. If the behaviour continues staff are advised to remove themselves from the situation.
Step 2	Report	Unacceptable behaviour reported internally The staff member will inform their line manager about the situation and the incident will be recorded.
Step 3	Review	Unacceptable behaviour investigated The line manager will investigate the situation and decide what action to take. Where relevant we will keep the customer informed. In some instances we may need to escalate to the Police.

How customers can appeal

If you disagree with the final decision you are entitled to make a complaint. Information on how to do this is available on: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency> or you can contact us at our National Customer Contact Centre. (Details below)

Contact information

General Enquires

National Customer Contact
Centre
PO Box 544
Rotherham
S60 1BY

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone: 03708 506 506

