Policy - Dealing with Unacceptable and Abusive behaviour

Your Waste Management Partner.

Policy Statement

1st Waste Management (1st Waste) is committed to dealing with all customers fairly and impartially, and to providing a high standard of service.

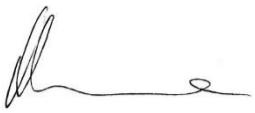
Our customer charter sets out how we will work with customers to deliver a professional and expert customer service experience.

Whilst most customers are satisfied with our services, we monitor our performance with satisfaction surveys. However, we work in an industry that has external factors that sometimes influence the service we supply. We understand incomplete or late services can cause our customers distress and inconvenience, which in turn may make them act out of character – in a small number of cases, customers may behave in an unacceptable manner.

We also recognise that other parties are integral to the services we offer, particularly our suppliers and our internal colleagues, to whom this policy also applies.

Like every employer, 1st Waste has a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our staff, and our staff should be able to work without the fear or threat of abuse, harassment, discrimination, or violence. We will support all colleagues in raising these concerns about how they feel they have been treated and commit to investigating and addressing every incident.

This policy sets out 1st Waste's approach to unacceptable customer behaviour and unreasonable demands, including the actions to take when faced with this and how this behaviour should be reported. It is designed to ensure 1st Waste can manage instances of this nature in a fair and consistent manner.



Richard Groome

Managing Director

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What constitutes unacceptable customer behaviour?

Unacceptable behaviour means acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone's stress, frustration, anger or their position. It may involve acts, words or physical gestures that could cause another person distress or discomfort.

There are other behaviours that may be considered abusive, aggressive, or unreasonable, in line with this policy.

This is behaviour or language that could cause someone to feel afraid, threatened, bullied, or abused. It may include:

- physical violence or threats of physical violence
- bullying or intimidating behaviour
- derogatory remarks relating to somebody's race, sex, gender, age or sexuality
- comments relating to disability, perceived gender, religion, belief, or any other personal characteristic
- offensive gestures
- shouting
- insulting or degrading language - including inappropriate 'banter'
- innuendo
- malicious allegations

Sexual harassment

Unacceptable behaviour clearly includes sexual harassment, which is defined as "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which is intended to, or has the effect of, violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them". Sexual harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Policy - How to deal with Unacceptable customer behaviour

1st Waste will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour. Where unacceptable behaviour is identified, depending on the circumstances.

1st Waste have instructed staff to:

- Before any action is taken, customers should always be warned that they are behaving in an unacceptable way so that they can change their behaviour.
- Try to de-escalate - remain calm and professional, then actively listen to the customer's concerns without interruption, showing empathy and acknowledging their frustration.
- Apologize for the inconvenience, confirm your understanding by asking questions and summarizing, and agree on a clear plan of action, managing their expectations about what you can deliver.
- After providing clear warnings if de-escalation fails and the language and behaviour is abusive, terminate the call.
- Immediately report the incident to your line manager

What constitute unreasonable Demands

Customers may make requests, or place demands on our services that we cannot reasonably accommodate. Depending on the nature of these, they might be classed as unreasonable demands or irritating contact.

The parameters for this will depend on the circumstances and each case should be considered on its own merit. A customer who is being persistent isn't necessarily displaying unacceptable customer behaviour.

However, the behaviour of customer who persistently contacts us about the same issue can amount to unreasonable demand. Such behaviour takes up a disproportionate amount of our time and resources and can affect our ability to provide a service to others.

Unreasonable demands can include, but isn't limited to:

- the volume of correspondence they generate or send, including sending the same or similar requests repeatedly
- seeking an outcome that cannot be achieved, including persistent rejection of decisions made or explanations.
- repeated and frequent contact without giving enough time to respond to previous correspondence
- insisting on speaking to someone who is not available or is not the appropriate person (such as the Chief Executive)

Procedure - How to deal with Unreasonable demands

- Try to de-escalate - remain calm and professional, then actively listen to the customer's concerns without interruption, showing empathy and acknowledging their frustration.
- Apologize for the inconvenience, confirm your understanding by asking questions and summarizing, and agree on a clear plan of action, managing their expectations about what you can deliver.
- Explain that you will escalate the issue to your line manager/team leader, and pass the call to them or, if that is not possible, advise you will get them to call back.
- Escalate the issue

Post call actions - Both unreasonable demands and abusive behaviour

- **Document the Incident:** Make a detailed note of the call, the reasons for termination, and any threats or serious issues, noting the caller's details for management.
- **Report the Incident:** Inform your line manager and follow company protocols for reporting such incidents.
- **Provide Support:** Managers should conduct a review and provide support, to staff who have been affected by abusive calls.
- **Limit Future Contact:** Depending on the severity and persistence of the behaviour, a company may restrict future contact by assigning a specific staff member to the customer, limiting contact to certain times, or even barring inbound calls.
- **Review:** Managers should review any incident at the weekly manager meeting and further escalate as necessary. Likewise, should evaluate if further training is required or the procedures should be reviewed.