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# Summary: managing unreasonable customer conduct

Policy Owner: Ministerial Services, Waka Kotuia Engagement & Partnerships

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# SUMMARY: MANAGING UNREASONABLE CUSTOMER CONDUCT

## Purpose

This procedure and guideline sets out how NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) will identify and respond to unreasonable complainant conduct (UCC).

It ensures that, when customers behave in an unreasonable way, NZTA:

- continues to respond to customers and give them a high standard of service
- protects the health and safety of our staff
- uses our resources efficiently.

## Unreasonable conduct

Unreasonable customer contact is any behaviour by a customer that, because of its nature or frequency, causes substantial health, safety, resource or equity problems for NZTA, our staff, our other customers, or the customer him or herself.

Examples of unreasonable customer conduct include one or a combination of:

- aggression, verbal abuse, or threats of harm or violence
- prolific communication by letter, telephone, email or social media
- inappropriate demands on our resources
- an unreasonable refusal to accept a NZTA decision or recommendation.

## What to do if you experience unreasonable customer conduct

Staff members who experience customer conduct that they think is unreasonable should record this in section A of the *Unreasonable customer conduct form* (UCC form) within 24 hours and give the form to their reporting manager.

You'll find a link to the UCC form in the 'more information' section of this document.

## How to manage unreasonable customer conduct

When a senior / national manager, in consultation with the relevant Manager Ministerial Services, concludes that a customer's conduct towards NZTA staff is unreasonable, the manager will decide whether to take no further action, issue the customer with a warning letter or restrict the customer's access to NZTA.

The manager will:

- consider what risk the customer poses to NZTA and which restrictions would best mitigate that risk
- impose the least restrictive response necessary
- choose a response that is relevant to the subject of the unacceptable conduct (for example, a highways issue should not restrict a customer's ability to renew a driver licence)
- adapt the response to the customer's personal circumstances, if necessary.

The manager can restrict a customer's conduct to a sole contact point, restrict a customer's contact to certain subjects, restrict a customer's methods to contact us or restrict a customer to contacting us through a representative. In extreme circumstances, the manager can recommend the Chief Executive terminates the customer's access to NZTA services, except for those which are statutory in nature.

Customers have the right to appeal restrictions imposed on them. If the Chief Executive decides to restrict a customer's access to all of NZTA's services, the customer has the right to request that the Ombudsman reviews this decision.

NZTA must review any restrictions it imposes on a customer at least every 12 months.

## How to manage stress

Dealing with demanding, abusive, aggressive or violent customers can be stressful, distressing or frightening for our staff. It is perfectly normal to get upset or experience stress if you are dealing with a difficult situation involving a customer.

NZTA is a responsible employer that supports staff who experience stress at work through debriefing or counselling. When they need to, staff can also use the [Employee Assistance Programme](#), which is a free, confidential counselling service. To make an appointment, call 0800 327 669.

More information

You can find more information at the following links:

- Full policy: *Managing Unreasonable Customer Conduct*
- *Unreasonable customer conduct form*