Plumbers,
Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Board

Responding to customer complaints

From time to time, customers may be unhappy with the services you provide. How you respond can make a big difference. Good communication can resolve issues early and may even prevent a complaint being made to the Board.

Here are some tips to help you deal with customer complaints:

Communicate clearly with your customers

Clear communication with your customers is key to resolving complaints and can help prevent complaints from being made in the first place.

Good communication is most important around costs and pricing.
Consider the following tips:

- Be clear about the difference between a quote and an estimate.
- Follow a 'no surprises' approach to quoting and invoicing.
- Be specific about what you quoting or invoice covers.
- Itemise what is and what is not included in your quote
- Explain how changes to the scope of work will be dealt with.
- Be upfront about your approach to travel charges (e.g. when charging starts, or what happens if you need to leave site to collect equipment or supplies).



Have a process for responding to complaints

Develop a simple process so complaints are dealt with fairly and efficiently. Keep in mind:

- Act quickly: ignoring a complaint won't make it go away, and delays usually make matters worse.
- Acknowledge the complaint: you don't have to agree with the customer, but it's important to listen and show that you take their concerns seriously.
- Provide information: explain the situation clearly to help the customer understand. This can prevent escalation.
- Stay professional: remember, customers are not trained practitioners and rely on you to explain things in plain language.

Keep good records

Keep good records of any complaints you receive and your responses top these (eg emails, invoices, records of phone conversations, text messages, photographs of the work, a description of how the matter was resolved).

Good records will help you if the complaint is taken further (eg Disputes Tribunal or to the Board).

Over time, you may also be able to review your complaint records to see if there are any areas in your business where you could make improvements.

Be open to resolve the complaint

When a customer raises a concern, being open to understanding their perspective can help you find a solution. Try asking questions such as:

- What matters most to you?
- What are the consequences for you?
- Why is this a problem for you?
- How do you think this can be resolved?
- What would you like to happen next?

The goal is to identify as many ways of responding to the complaint as possible. The more options you have, the more likely you will be able to resolve it in a way that works for both you and the customer.

Responding to complaints made to the Board

If a complaint about your work is made to the Board, it is very important that you provide a full and detailed response. This will help the matter to be dealt with promptly and fairly. Include details about:

- the work completed
- who did what work
- the licence or authorisation status of the people involved in the work at the time the work was carried out
- what happened and how it happened
- any steps you took to try to resolve the matter with the customer.

For more information on the Board's complaints and disciplinary process, please visit our website www.pgdb.co.nz

Your personal information

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