

Covid-19 Update – Respect Retail Workers –customer abuse

The SDA understands this is a distressing time, especially for retail staff in supermarkets & pharmacies. The situation is ongoing and changes rapidly but regardless of low stock levels, changes to trading hours or long customer waiting times, there is no excuse for abuse and violence from customers.

The SDA is here to support members .

Zero tolerance for abuse and violence from customers

Whilst we understand this is a distressing time for many people in our community, customers need to keep calm. There is never an excuse for customers to be abusive towards retail workers. It is not your fault if an item is out of stock or the checkout queue is too long. SDA members have been campaigning to eliminate abuse and violence through our No One Deserves A Serve campaign for several years. This is now more important than ever.

Your employer must provide you with a safe work environment. To support you your employer should take a zero tolerance approach to abusive customer behaviour. Your employer must have a process in place so all employees know what to do when incidents occur including how to report incidents.

Please continue to report all incidents at your workplace so there is an official record of the abuse or violence.

A zero tolerance approach to abusive customer behaviour should include denying service to customers behaving inappropriately, the issuing of bans or prohibition notices to aggressive customers and the calling of police in any instance of customers being violent towards or assaulting workers.

What should I do if I experience customer abuse or violence or am threatened?

We recommend with any situation if you are feeling unsafe you should immediately seek assistance from management.



We recommend that you:

1. **Do NOT chase, handle, touch or block the offender in any way.**
2. **Stay calm** and behave in a non-confrontational manner. Do not respond aggressively or provoke the offender. Do not respond to insults.
3. **Stay where other team members are present for safety or move to where there are other team members present.** Keep a safe distance from the offender and do not invade the offender's personal space – usually at least two arm lengths or two metres.
4. Whilst waiting for a manager, if engaged with an offender **listen** to them and step away from them to avoid physical attack if you can.

Even in instances where a customer has left the store after abusing team members, the company has a process that should be used to prevent this in future. This includes reviewing CCTV footage and working with police to identify offenders who can be banned from the store. If these offenders breach bans and re-enter the store, they can be issued with trespass notices as well.

If you experience abuse or violence from a customer and are unsure what to do, ask your manager or supervisor for help dealing with the situation.

Please share our [video message](#) - **There's No Excuse For Abuse** - with your family and friends.