

Abusive Customer Process

As everyone has learned through TARGET training, there are steps we can take to attempt to calm a customer down. Occasionally there are times when a customer is using inappropriate language and we need to keep in mind that more than likely the customer is upset at the current water situation and not you personally. (Remember Q-TIP – Quit Taking It Personally)

Below are the steps to take from the onset of abusive nature from the customer through involving a Supervisor, if needed.

1st Step: Initial Contact with Customer

Step	
A.	Utilize defusing skills and ask the customer to refrain from the abusive behavior.
B.	If customer continues, again ask to refrain from the behavior.
C.	If the customer has not refrained, advise them that they will be placed on hold while being transferred to a Supervisor.

2nd Step: Escalating the Matter

Step	
A.	Call the Escalation Queue (ext 5656), during normal business hours using the Transfer option on your phone. If the call is taking place outside of Escalation Queue availability, reach out to a Supervisor on Duty.
B.	Do not wait in the Escalation Queue for any longer than 5 minutes.
C.	If you are unable to reach anyone within 5 minutes. Return and advise the customer that you are going to transfer them to the voicemail of a Supervisor.
D.	Transfer the customer to the voicemail of your direct Supervisor, if staffed. If your Supervisor is not staffed, send to the voicemail of staffed Supervisors and follow up by sending the Supervisor an email providing detailed customer information.

Abusive is defined as verbally attacking, using foul language, and emotionally out of control. At times, customers go beyond angry and become abusive. They might start the call in abusive mode, or might escalate to abusive from mere anger. Sometimes, if you don't tell them what they want to hear, they become abusive.

As soon as you perceive the customer's anger might escalate out of control, and you've tried your defusing skills and nothing works; call the customer by name, restate your name, remind the customer you want to solve the problem and that American Water wants them to be satisfied. Let them know you can solve the problem only when the language is appropriate.

“Any person capable of angering you becomes your master, he can anger you only when you permit yourself to be disturbed by him.” ~Epictetus