

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Policy

Title: Dealing with Difficult Customers Policy	
Policy No. 091	Legislative Authority:
Effective Date: May 25, 2021	Amended Date:

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide municipal staff and members of Council with the authority to deal with difficult or aggressive customers or traumatic incidents in the course of their duties.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer or their designate.
- 2.2. **Difficult customer** means a person engaging in aggressive or abusive behaviour) or a person with unreasonable demands or engaging in unreasonable levels of contact.
- 2.3. **Prohibited customer** means a person who has been prohibited from entering the Municipal Services Building or another municipally owned property.
- 2.4. **Aggressive or abusive behaviour** means language (whether verbal or written) and/or behaviours that may cause staff or members of Council to feel afraid, threatened or abused and may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.

Examples of behaviours which could be interpreted as acts of customer aggression include:

- hostile or threatening gestures;
 - threatening or offensive behaviour;
 - verbal abuse of either a personal or general nature by means of innuendo, raised voice or obscenities, including racist and sexist comments;
 - physical violence against a person such as hitting, kicking, seizing, pushing or punching;
or
 - physical violence against an employee's personal or departmental property, possessions or objects.
- 2.5. **Unreasonable demands and / or unreasonable levels of contact** means behaviour that impacts excessively on the work of staff and members of Council, or when dealing with

the matter takes up an excessive amount of time and in so doing, disadvantages other customers.

Examples of behaviours which could be interpreted as acts of unreasonable demand or unreasonable levels of contact include:

- repeatedly contacts municipal staff or members of Council in person, by phone, email, etc.;
- contacts various staff members about the same issue;
- raises the same issue repeatedly; or
- sends municipal staff or members of Council large numbers of documents about which the relevance is not clear.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1. This policy pertains to interactions with customers in person as well as communication through email, phone, and social media.
- 3.2. At the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, customers have a right to be heard, understood and respected. Staff and members of Council also have the right to work in a safe environment, free from any abuse or harm caused by others.
- 3.3. All customers must treat staff and members of Council with courtesy and respect. It is understood that customers can become angry or upset during interactions with their municipal government. In a very small number of cases the actions of some customers become unacceptable.
- 3.4. The Municipality will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour directed at staff or Council members from members of the public while delivering services.
- 3.5. The CAO may limit interactions with a member of the public who engages in aggressive or abusive behaviors.
- 3.6. The CAO may also limit staff resources used to address unreasonable levels of contact from an individual.
- 3.7. A customer's behaviour will not be deemed unacceptable just because the customer is forceful or determined. However, actions that result in abusive behaviour or unreasonable demands are unacceptable.
- 3.8. A member of the public may be prohibited from entering the Municipal Services Building by the CAO if deemed to be impacting a safe and healthy work environment.

- 3.9. Members of the public with a complaint about being refused service under this policy may file a complaint as per Policy 092 Complaints Handling.

Clerk’s Annotation for Official Policy Book

Date of Notice to Council Members: May 18, 2021
Date of Passage of Current Policy: May 25, 2021

Date of Notice to Council Members
of Intent to Consider Amendments:

Date of Passage of Amendments:

I certify that this “MODL Policy 091 *Dealing with Difficult Customers*” was adopted by Municipal Council as indicated above.



May 25, 2021

Municipal Clerk

Date