



Customer Service

8. Making repairs

Customers can feel very vulnerable when seeking repairs to goods because of their lack of expertise. They depend on you to make the repairs and it is important that you involve them as much as possible and let them know what is happening. Do so and you will win their confidence in your service.

A wide range of situations involve making repairs for customers, including:

- going to a customer's place (home or business) to make the repair
- collecting the product and taking it away for repair
- repairing a product that the customer has brought to you
- repairing products as a 'remote fix' e.g. repairs to computer systems
- providing a central point of contact for the customer when the repair has to be done elsewhere
- repairing your own product or that of someone else.

Just as there are many situations, so too does the urgency and sensitivity of the repair vary. Repairs can range from extremely urgent through to non-critical cases where repairs can be carried out at leisure.

The matters customers value in any repair situation include:

- having confidence that you know what you are doing
- the speed of the repair and the expectation that repair times need to be continually reduced. An estimate of the repair time and costs involved are essential requirements
- not being blamed for the problem, and for your business to take responsibility to fix it
- showing concern for their situation
- having a clear contact point and being kept informed of progress
- being advised of what they can do to help avoid the problem recurring.

The key phases in any repair activity include:

- taking the customer's report of the problem
- fixing the problem
- any follow-up after the repair.

To assist you when making repairs for customers, follow the checklist on the next page.

Checklist - Making repairs

1. Reporting the problem

- ▷ Clearly advise your customers where they can report any problems.
- ▷ Irrespective of who the customer contacts in your business, ensure all staff know how best to handle the problem report to ensure the customers' enquiry can be dealt with effectively.
- ▷ Ensure your customers can report any problems to you 24 hours a day.
- ▷ Make it easy for customers to describe the problem.
- ▷ Advise the customer of what you will do next, and the process involved in making the repairs.
- ▷ Provide the customer with a contact number to call for easy reference if they have any queries during the repair process.

2. Fixing the problem

- ▷ Clearly demonstrate to the customer that you understand the problem.
- ▷ Advise the customer what they should do next, if anything at all.
- ▷ Advise the customer that you will take responsibility for investigating and fixing the problem.
- ▷ Show concern for the customers' situation, and demonstrate a sense of urgency.
- ▷ Advise the customer:
 - The shortest time it will take to fix the problem, and check that this is acceptable to the customer.
 - How much it will cost to fix the problem. This would include clearly specifying if there is no cost, such as under a service guarantee.
- ▷ Gain the customers' approval before you commence fixing the problem, to ensure there are no misunderstandings.
- ▷ Keep the customer informed of progress during the investigation and repair process.
- ▷ Fix the problem quickly and fully - first time and on time.
- ▷ Advise the customer as soon as the problem has been fixed.
- ▷ Confirm and explain to the customer in plain language the cause of the problem, and the work that was done.
- ▷ Leave the customer with a record of the repair work that was done.
- ▷ Provide a guarantee for all work done.
- ▷ Where appropriate:
 - explain what you have done to prevent the problem occurring again
 - suggest to the customer what they could do to prevent the problem occurring again.

3. Follow-up

- ▷ Ideally within 2 days, follow-up with the customer to check everything is working as the customer expected.

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