



Murray Irrigation



Zero Tolerance Procedure
PROC-01-24
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Document Revision Summary

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0	27/03/2023	First draft	Geoff Mann	Josh Bode	
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1 Purpose

The Zero Tolerance Policy and Procedure addresses a very limited number of cases where actions by customers or members of the public are deemed inappropriate and/or pose a risk to Murray Irrigation employees.

This procedure explains how we treat customers in a fair and positive way, whilst managing actions that potentially put employees at risk.

The procedure also guides how we may change access to our services when we consider a customer's actions to be unacceptable.

2 Scope

The Zero Tolerance Policy applies to all Murray Irrigation customers and members of the public who engage in contact with Murray Irrigation employees. Employees includes contracted workers and volunteers.

The procedure provides a framework for appropriate actions by Murray Irrigation.

3 Principles

- All Murray Irrigation employees have the right to a safe and supportive working environment free of physical and/or mental and emotional abuse, aggression, harassment, intimidation, or violence.
- Employees should always feel safe to undertake their work activities without fear of abuse, violence, aggression, harassment or intimidation from customers or members of the public.
- Employees should always feel safe to live in their community without fear of abuse, violence, aggression, harassment or intimidation from customers or members of the public.
- Employees and customers have the right to be heard, understood, and respected.
- Types of abuse and behaviours that will not be tolerated are clearly described and communicated.
- Consequences for customers are clearly described, communicated, and enforced.
- Natural justice will apply to the implementation of the policy.
- The policy aligns with Murray Irrigation's Values, Customer Charter, Customer Service Standards, Compliance Policy, and Incident Investigation, Reporting & Notification Procedure.

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4 Supporting Policies and documents

Description	Doc No.
Murray Irrigation Zero Tolerance Policy	
Murray Irrigation Compliance Policy	https://www.murrayirrigation.com.au/about#Policies
Murray Irrigation Incident Investigation and Reporting Procedure	PROC-01-04 (MILi)
Murray Irrigation Incident Notification Schedule	No Doc No. (MILi)
Murray Irrigation Customer Service Charter	https://www.murrayirrigation.com.au/about#Policies
Murray Irrigation Entitlements Contract	https://www.murrayirrigation.com.au/about#Policies
Murray Irrigation Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Policy and Procedure	
Murray Irrigation Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Tools	

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer	- Overall responsibility for the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the Zero Tolerance Policy. - Provide resources to ensure there is clear communication processes, monitoring of compliance and reporting. - Review of appeals regarding decisions to restrict contact or services under this policy.
General Managers	- Ensuring the implementation, review, and compliance reporting of the Zero Tolerance Policy within their area of control. - Approval of warnings or notifications to restrict contact or services under this policy.
Managers	- Actively ensuring employees in their teams are implementing the Zero Tolerance Policy. - Investigating and reviewing incidents. - Proposing compliance actions to be taken. - Issuing of written warnings following relevant approval.
Employees	- Day to day implementation of the Zero Tolerance Policy including: - Identification of unacceptable behaviours. - Reporting of any situation where unacceptable behaviour is identified.

6 What is unacceptable behaviour?

Behaviour or language that causes employees to feel intimidated, afraid, offended, threatened, or abused is unacceptable.

Some individuals who approach Murray Irrigation employees may be frustrated, distressed or angry for several reasons. These factors can make it difficult for customers or the public to communicate effectively with employees, and for employees to understand and communicate in return. However, if this leads to aggressive or abusive behaviour towards employees, this is a breach of the policy.

Examples of aggressive or abusive behaviour include:

- **Inflammatory/derogatory statements** - remarks of a racial, sexist, xenophobic or discriminatory nature and unsubstantiated allegations.
- **Violent behaviour** - physical contact made in an aggressive or threatening manner. Including pushing; jostling; kicking; punching; physical restraint; sexual assault; spitting and use of weapons.
- **Threatening behaviour** - words or actions that cause a person to be concerned for their safety, the safety of colleagues, or the safety of their property. Includes visual threats or gestures; aggressive stance; sexually explicit or threatening language or body language; abusive phone calls; on-line bullying, use of aggressive dogs and obstruction or aggressive use of vehicles.
- **Abusive behaviour** - Words or actions that cause a person to feel harassed, intimidated or distressed. Includes offensive gestures; aggressive stance; abusive, provocative or obscene language and inappropriate use of social media.
- **Wilful damage to property** - This can belong to Murray Irrigation, its employees, contractors, or volunteers and includes buildings; fixtures; fittings; equipment and vehicles.
- **Psychological threatening behaviour** – including the deliberate use of a range of words and non-physical actions used with the purpose to manipulate, hurt, weaken or frighten a person mentally and emotionally.

7 What action will be taken?

Physical and/or mental and emotional abuse, aggression, harassment, intimidation, or violence will not be tolerated inside our organisation and will not be tolerated against employees from people outside the organisation.

If an employee feels that a customer or member of the public's behaviour is unacceptable, the following steps will be taken:

- **Step 1: Identify - customers behaviour as unacceptable.**

Ask the customer to modify their behaviour and explain why.

If the behaviour continues the employee should remove themselves from the situation. This can include ending a telephone call, appointment, or meeting or physically moving away from the site in the field.

In extreme cases of physical threats where employees feel in danger or are afraid for their well-being Triple 000 should be contacted immediately for Police assistance.

- **Step 2: Report - unacceptable behaviour internally.**

The employee will inform their line manager and raise an incident regarding the situation.

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➤ **Step 3: Review – investigate the unacceptable behaviour.**

A review of the incident will occur and be reported in line with the Incident Notification Schedule, along with actions to be taken.

These actions may include:

- terminating all contact,
- notifying the police,
- terminating service to the customer after providing reasonable notice of our intent to do so, or
- taking any other action that we consider appropriate given the circumstances.

The decision regarding the level of action to be taken will be determined by application of Murray Irrigation's Compliance Policy.

Decisions to restrict contact or services will require General Manager approval.

➤ **Step 4: Warn – customer behaviour not acceptable and proposed restrictions.**

A written warning will be issued to the customer which will:

- identify the unacceptable behaviour,
- explain why it is inappropriate,
- explain the steps that have been taken,
- advise that if this behaviour continues the restrictions or service changes that will be put in place,
- advise customer how they can appeal the decision.

The aim of the notification is to provide the customer with the opportunity to change their behaviour before any restrictions or service changes are applied.

Note there may be extreme situations where the warning and notification approach is unsuitable as the matter is being handled outside Murray Irrigation, for example Police involvement where charges have been laid.

➤ **Step 5: Notify - customer restrictions applied.**

If a customer's behaviour continues after they have been warned a notification letter immediately restricting or changing the complainant's access to services will be sent (without prior or further written warning).

The written notification will:

- identify the unacceptable behaviour,
- explain why it is inappropriate,
- explain the steps that have been taken,
- advise the date restrictions or service changes will be applied,
- advise customer how they can appeal the decision.

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8 Can a customer appeal a decision?

If a restriction or service change is placed on a customer, they will have ten (10) working days to appeal the decision.

Only arguments relating to the restriction or service change and not to the original issue, will be considered in the appeal process.

Appeal requests need to be in writing and must explain why the customer wishes to appeal the decision. The appeal request could include information regarding:

- the behaviours being wrongly identified,
- the restrictions or service changes are disproportionate,
- due to personal circumstances the restrictions or service changes will have a disproportionately negative impact.

Murray Irrigation Chief Executive Officer will consider the appeal and respond within ten (10) working days.

Murray Irrigation Chief Executive Officer has the sole discretion to overturn or change the restrictions or service changes based on what they determine to be fair and reasonable.

9 Reporting, Monitoring & Review

Reporting and monitoring on the application of this procedure will be through Murray Irrigation's incident reporting processes.

This procedure is subject to scheduled review to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to Murray Irrigation activities and processes and forms part of the management review process.

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