



# CSA Unit 7 : Customer Relations

## Chapter 1 Dealing with Customers: Professional Standards and Effective Communication

Customers feel safe and secure when they are confident that a service technician can solve their problems. In order to accomplish this, the gas service technician/fitter must always maintain a professional attitude and use effective communication techniques when dealing with customers.

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# Purpose and Objectives

## Purpose

Customers feel safe and secure when they are confident that a service technician can solve their problems. In order to accomplish this, the gas service technician/fitter must always maintain a professional attitude and use effective communication techniques when dealing with customers.



## Objectives

At the end of this Chapter, you will be able to:

- employ professional standards and behaviour; and
- use effective communication.

## Active Listening



# Key Terminology

Term	Abbreviation (symbol)	Definition
Active listening		Listening through words and nonverbal behaviours
Effective communication		Communicating using attitude, emotion, knowledge, and credibility along with the content of the message being conveyed

# Professional Attitude

## Importance of Professional Attitude

As a gas service technician, you must always maintain a professional attitude when dealing with customers. Customers feel safe and secure when they are confident that you can solve their problems.

## Building Customer Confidence

Your confidence in your technical skills and knowledge and your professional manner increase the customer's sense of confidence and security.





# Methods of Projecting a Professional Attitude



## Show Respect

Always show respect toward the customer. Never speak down to the customer.



## Clear Explanations

Give easily understood explanations of problems.



## Understand Customer Needs

The desire for the respect of other people is deeply ingrained in all of us. When dealing with customers, keep in mind that having someone tell us of our faults, failures, and shortcomings can be hurtful and offensive.

# Explaining Technical Issues

## Use Simple Terms

Remember that the customer may not be aware of the technical nature of your work. Explain the technical aspects of the problem or your work in simple terms, but do not be condescending in your explanation or in your tone of speaking.

## Explain Function

First, explain that the thermostat is a device that senses temperature changes and switches the furnace on and off to maintain the desired temperature in an area of the building.

## Describe Solution

Second, advise the customer what needs adjustment or repair in terms they can easily understand.



# Professional Appearance

## Importance of Appearance

A neat, well-groomed appearance indicates to a customer that your work will reflect the same care and consideration.

If you are professional, then you should look professional.





# Appearance Guidelines



## Clean Uniforms

Uniforms and clothing should always be clean and fit well.



## Well-Groomed Hair

Hair must be clean, well-groomed, and neatly combed.



## Facial Hair

It is essential to be clean-shaven. Neatly trim your beards and mustaches when you wear them.



# Unprofessional Appearance

## Customer Concerns

A gas technician/fitter arrives at a customer's premises unshowered, unshaven, and wearing soiled, wrinkled clothing and dirty footwear. Most customers would be concerned about the quality of work they would see from a service person appearing in such a condition, and understandably so.

## Reflection on Character

An untidy appearance indicates a lack of self-respect and a lack of respect for the customer.

# Workplace Behaviour

As the representative of your company, you must always be aware of the impression you convey to the customer. An important part of your customer service responsibilities is your behaviour while working on the customer's premises.





# Workplace Etiquette: Do's



## Ask Permission

Ask permission when it is necessary for you to move furniture or other items.



## Provide Warnings

Warn the customer if you are going to cause undue noise or other disturbance.



## Request Resources

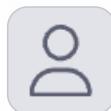
Ask permission to use water, electrical power, etc.



## Clean Up

Clean up all the waste and mess that your work has created.

# Workplace Etiquette: Don'ts



## No Wandering

Do not wander about the customer's premises without asking first.



## No Eating or Smoking

Do not eat or smoke on the customer's premises.



## No Beverages

Do not drink coffee, tea, or other beverages without the customer's invitation.



## No Disruptions

Do not disrupt the work of other personnel on the premises.

**HOW TO SET PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

1. Identify and Prioritize Your Core Values
2. Determine Your Boundaries
3. Use the Job Interview Process to Your Advantage
4. Communicate Your Boundaries Early On
5. Learn to Say No (& Know When to Say Yes)
6. Don't Forget About Emotional Boundaries
7. Know When To Walk Away



# More Workplace Etiquette Don'ts



## Phone Usage

Do not use the customer's telephone without the customer's permission.



## Leaving Disarray

Do not leave equipment and the customer's premises in disarray if you will leave the building to get supplies or tools.



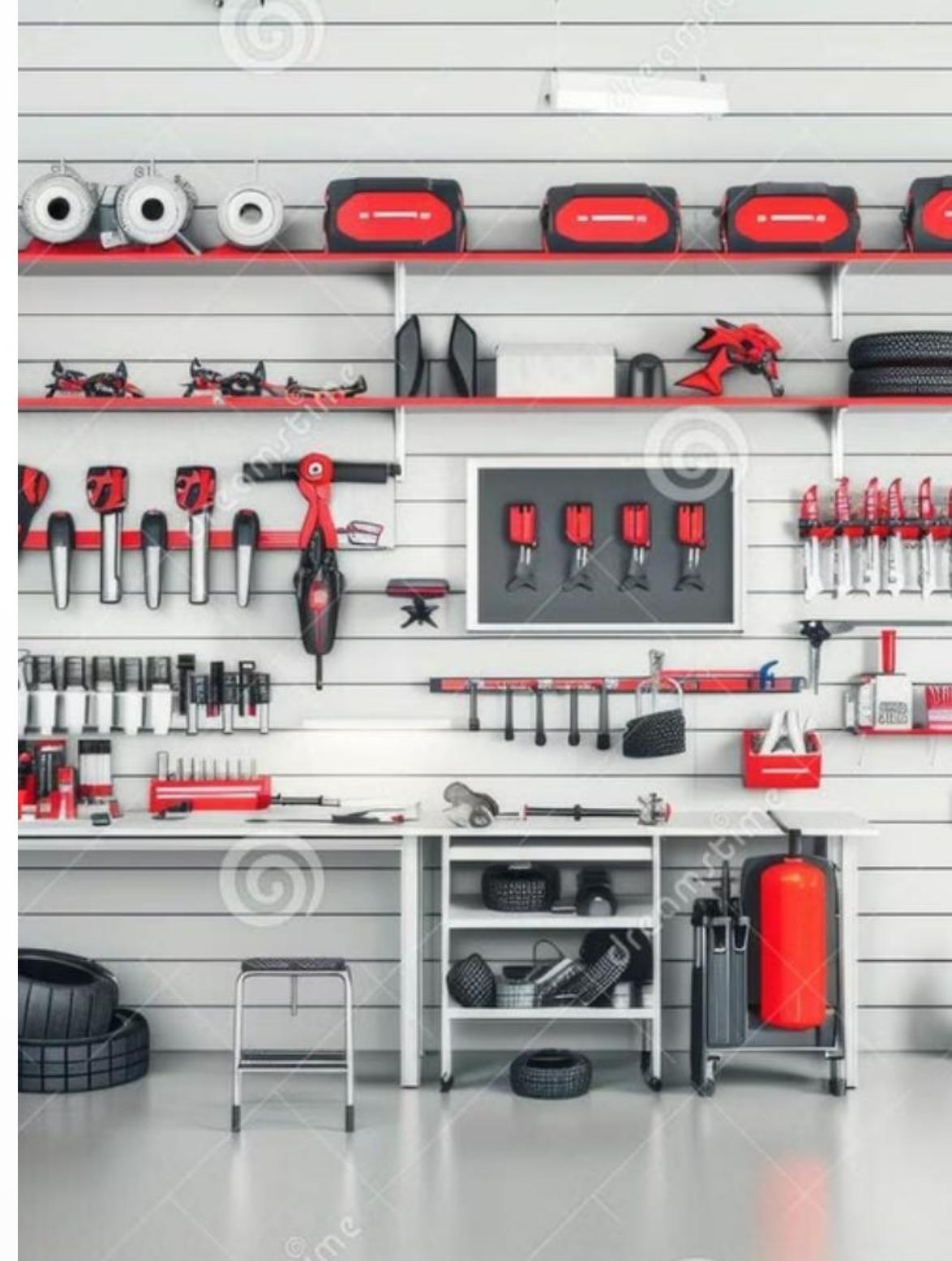
## Hazardous Materials

Do not leave hazardous equipment and materials unattended.

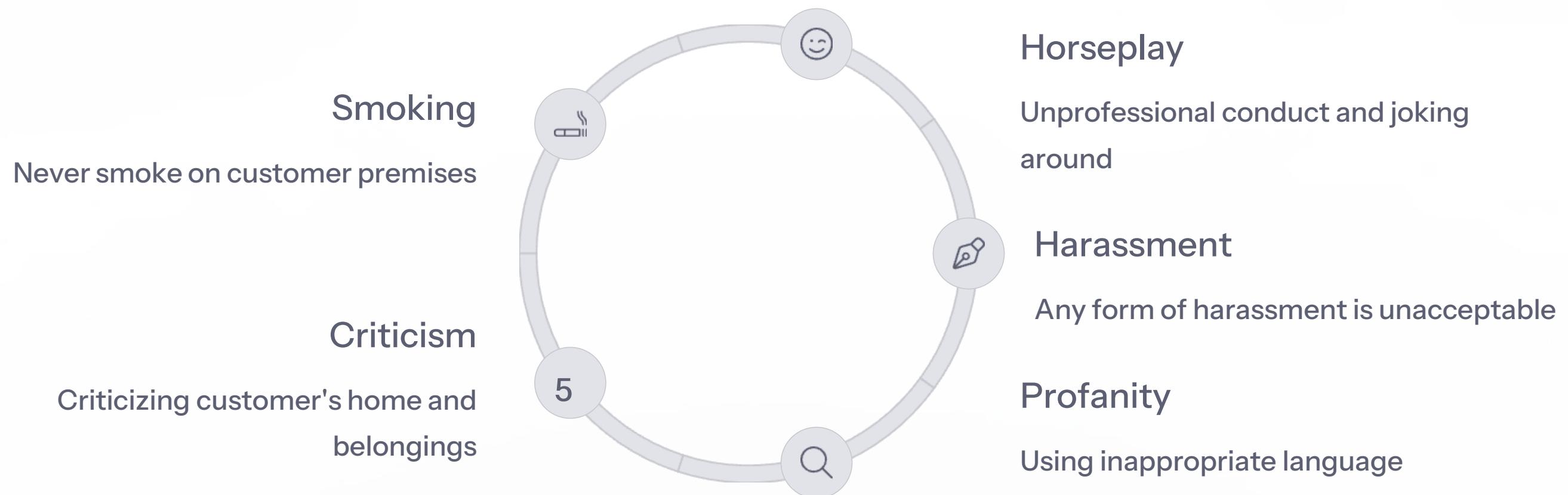


## Tool Placement

Do not leave tools or tool box on appliances that may scratch the surface.



# Unacceptable Behaviours



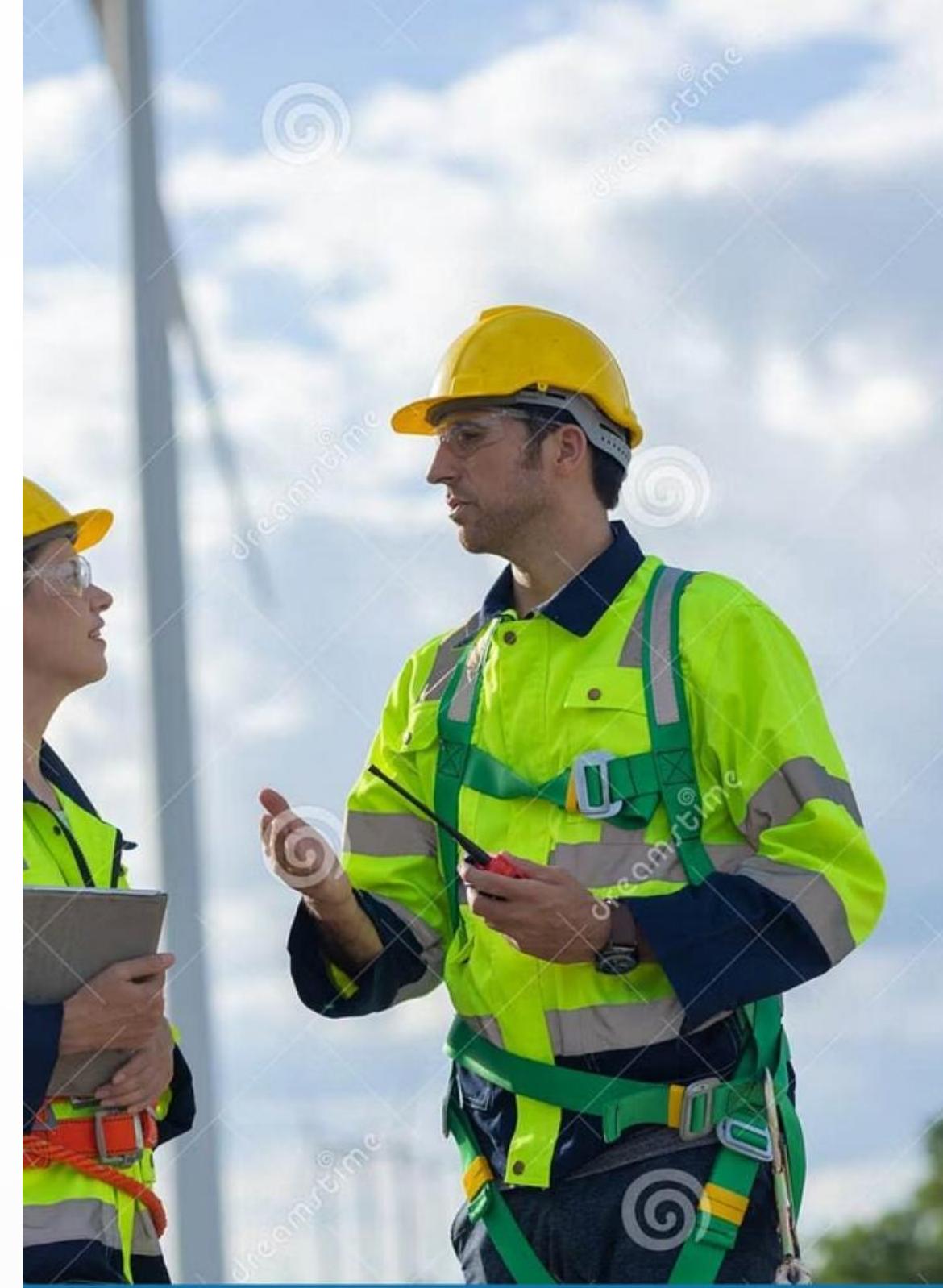
# When to Refer to Higher Authority

## Beyond Your Scope

At times, you may encounter questions from a customer to which you do not know the answer or that are beyond the scope of your authority or technical knowledge to answer.

## Proper Referral

In these cases, you should refer the customer to a senior crew member (if present) or a supervisory staff member who can answer the customer's question.





# Issues to Refer to Higher Authority



## Non-technical Questions

Questions outside your technical expertise



## Contract Terms

Questions about contractual agreements



## Warranty Terms

Questions about warranty coverage and limitations



## Safety Issues

Concerns about installation safety that require higher authority

# Effective Communication



# Active Listening Techniques

## Eye Contact

Establishing eye contact while talking and taking notes, when necessary, will help you maintain your focus on the customer's questions and comments.



## Quiet Environment

If you are in a noisy or crowded environment, suggest moving to a location that is free from noise and other distractions so that you and the customer can converse more easily.

## Avoid Interrupting

Show patience by letting the customer complete his or her explanation before you respond.

# Communication Strategies



**G A S T E C H N I C I A N . C A**  
T R A I N I N G   A N D   E X A M   P R E P



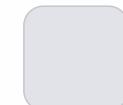
## Acknowledge Concerns

Acknowledge the customer's concerns.



## Show Sympathy

Be sympathetic to the customer's problem or request.



## Ask for Clarification

Ask for clarification on points raised so that correct information can be passed on if necessary.



## Use Resources

Don't be afraid to ask for the service manual. It is impossible to retain all the specific information about every appliance. That's why the manuals stay with the appliances.



# More Communication Strategies



## Take Notes

Make notes to pass on to supervisory staff or other concerned parties.



## Use Simple Terms

Use layperson's terms to answer customer's questions and requests and ensure that the customer understands your explanation before proceeding on to a new topic.



## Recap Information

Recap or paraphrase the customer's explanation of the problem or request in order to clarify your understanding of it; this ensures the customer that he/she has accurately communicated it to you.



## Get Agreement

Ensure that the customer agrees to any corrective action you will take before commencing work.

# First Contact with a Customer

## Determine the Problem

The first thing to do after arriving at a customer's premises is to determine what the problem is. You do this by asking why the customer called for service.

### Ask for Description

A good way to begin is by asking the customer to describe the problem if possible. The things you need to know are what, when, and where did the customer see, hear, touch, or smell something that indicated there was a problem.

### Listen Carefully

Make sure to listen closely to the customer's answers. Customers and/or operators can often lead you to the problem, saving you time and them money.

### Gather All Facts

It is important to accurately determine what the problem is. If necessary, you must continue to ask the customer questions until you understand all the facts of the situation.

# Asking the Right Questions

## Effective Question

"Mr. Smith, I understand that you have a problem with your furnace. Could you describe what kind of trouble you are having with it?"

This type of question is very useful for getting the kind of information that you require to determine the problem.

Asking the right question makes all the difference.

## Less Effective Question

"Mr. Smith, I understand that you have a problem with your furnace. Could you please show me where the furnace is?"

If this was the case, you would know where to find the furnace, but would be no further ahead in discovering the actual problem.



# Value of Customer Input

## First Step in Troubleshooting

Customer input is an important first step in troubleshooting problems.

## Win-Win Situation

You get the basic information you need, and the customer is brought into the process, making it a win-win situation for both parties.

# Informing the Customer

## Addressing Customer Distress

Unusual or loud noises, the smell of gas, and appliance failure can be very distressing to a customer. Once you have identified and/or solved the problem, it is important to inform the customer in terms they can easily understand, what the problem was and how you resolved it.

## Ensuring Safety and Security

Ensuring the customer's sense of safety and security is an important aspect of customer relations. People's fears and concerns are usually based on personal experience, and it is important to take them seriously and use the facts of the situation to allay those fears and concerns.



# Simple Explanations

## Technical Unfamiliarity

Most customers are not familiar with the technical aspects of your trade and depend on your expertise to solve their problem.

## Value of Explanation

A simple explanation goes a long way toward ensuring their sense of well-being and comfort.

# Example: Addressing Customer Distress

## The Scenario

Loud noises are distressful to a customer. Mr. Martin has placed an emergency call for service because his furnace is periodically making loud noises.

The previous week, a gas explosion suspectedly destroyed a house in his town. You arrive on the scene and find Mr. Martin visibly distressed.



# Resolving the Issue and Reassuring the Customer

## Investigate the Problem

After investigating the problem, you discover that the flame on the furnace pilot burner is too small.

## Fix the Issue

You change the pilot filter, adjust the pilot flame, test ignition, and put the furnace back in operation, but the customer is still obviously fearful.

## Provide Reassurance

Before you leave, it is essential that you assure him that the issue has been fixed and there is no danger.

## Explain the Solution

The best way to accomplish this is to give a brief explanation of the problem.





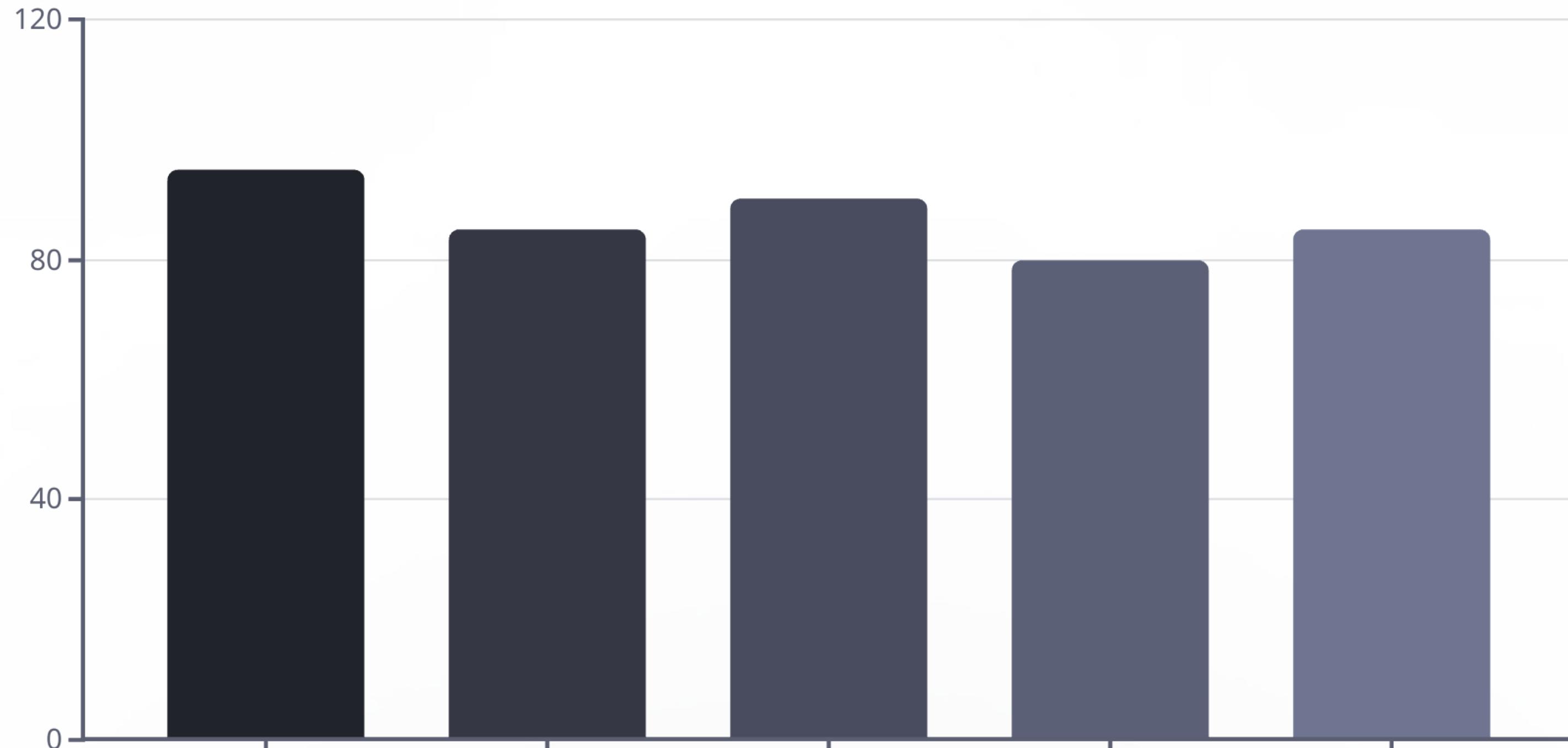
## Effective Explanation Example

"Mr. Martin, I discovered that the pilot light on your furnace was not functioning properly. When this happens, the main burner does not light quickly: there is a delayed ignition. The pilot filter was dirty and has now been replaced with a new, clean filter. I have tested the furnace and ignition is now reliable and safe."

Through good communication skills and effective customer service attitudes, you put yourself in a positive light, and the company you represent will reap the benefits in the bottom line.

# Red Seal Alignment

The professional standards and communication skills discussed align with various Red Seal tasks and CSA Gas Trade Units.



# CSA Gas Trade Units Alignment

9

CSA Units

Number of CSA Gas Trade Units that relate to customer service

20

Red Seal Tasks

Total Red Seal Tasks in the gas technician program

100%

Relevance

Percentage of tasks where customer service skills are important

## SPECIAL INSPECTION SERVICE SERVICE D'INSPECTION SPECIALE

Gas safety evaluation based on Canadian codes requirements. This evaluation represents the results of a single inspection and does not constitute a certification.



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ct No. / Numéro de Projet :

ance Type / Type d'appareil :

ufacturer / Fabricant :

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of Fuel(s) / Type de Carburant :

and Min Input Rate / Débits calorifiques min et max :

and Min Manifold Pressure / Pressions min et max au Collecteur :

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gn Altitude / Altitude De Conception:

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ly Voltage / Tension D'alimentation Volts  Amps

rol Voltage / Tension de Contrôle Volts  Amps

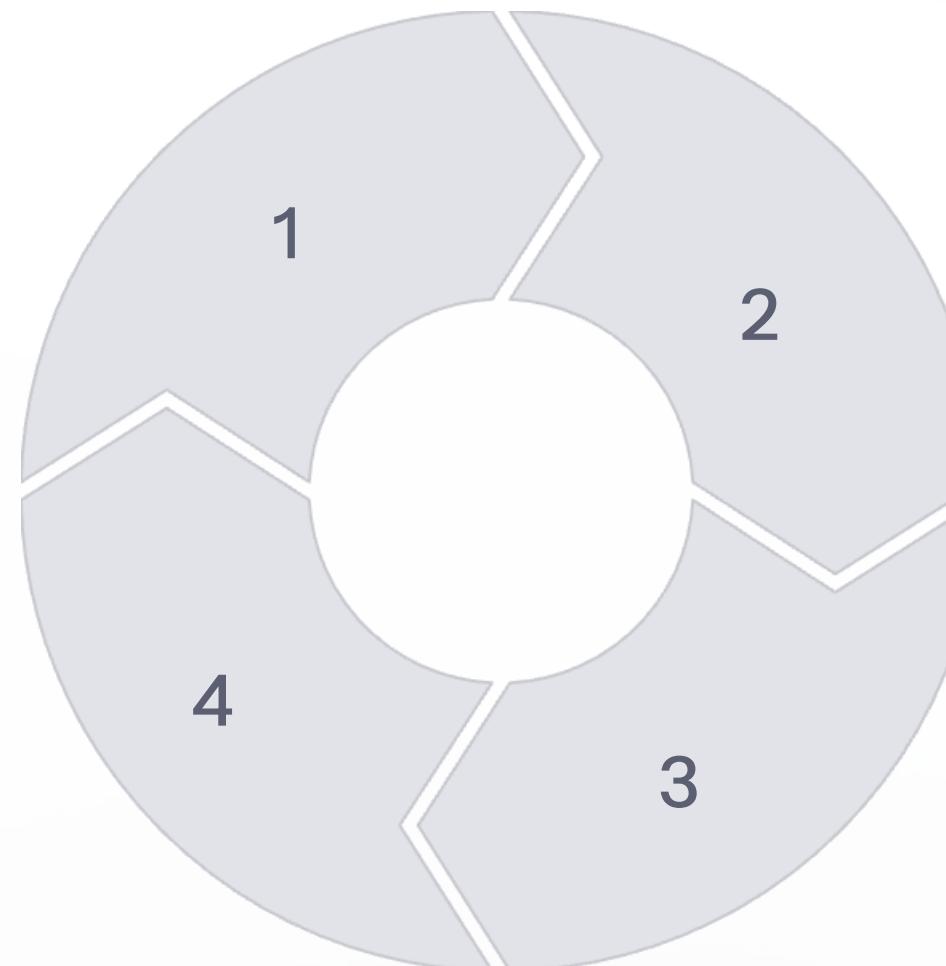
# Benefits of Professional Customer Service

**Customer Satisfaction**  
Customers feel valued and respected

**Customer Loyalty**  
Customers return for future service needs

**Company Reputation**  
Builds positive image of the company

**Referrals**  
Satisfied customers recommend services



# Communication in Different Scenarios



## Elderly Customers

May need more patience and simpler explanations. Speak clearly and be prepared to repeat information if necessary.

## Technically Knowledgeable Customers

May appreciate more detailed explanations. Be prepared to discuss technical aspects while still maintaining professional boundaries.

## Anxious Customers

Need reassurance and clear information about safety. Focus on explaining safety measures and how problems have been resolved.

# Handling Difficult Situations



## Stay Calm

Maintain professional composure



## Listen Actively

Let the customer express concerns

3



## Show Empathy

Acknowledge their feelings

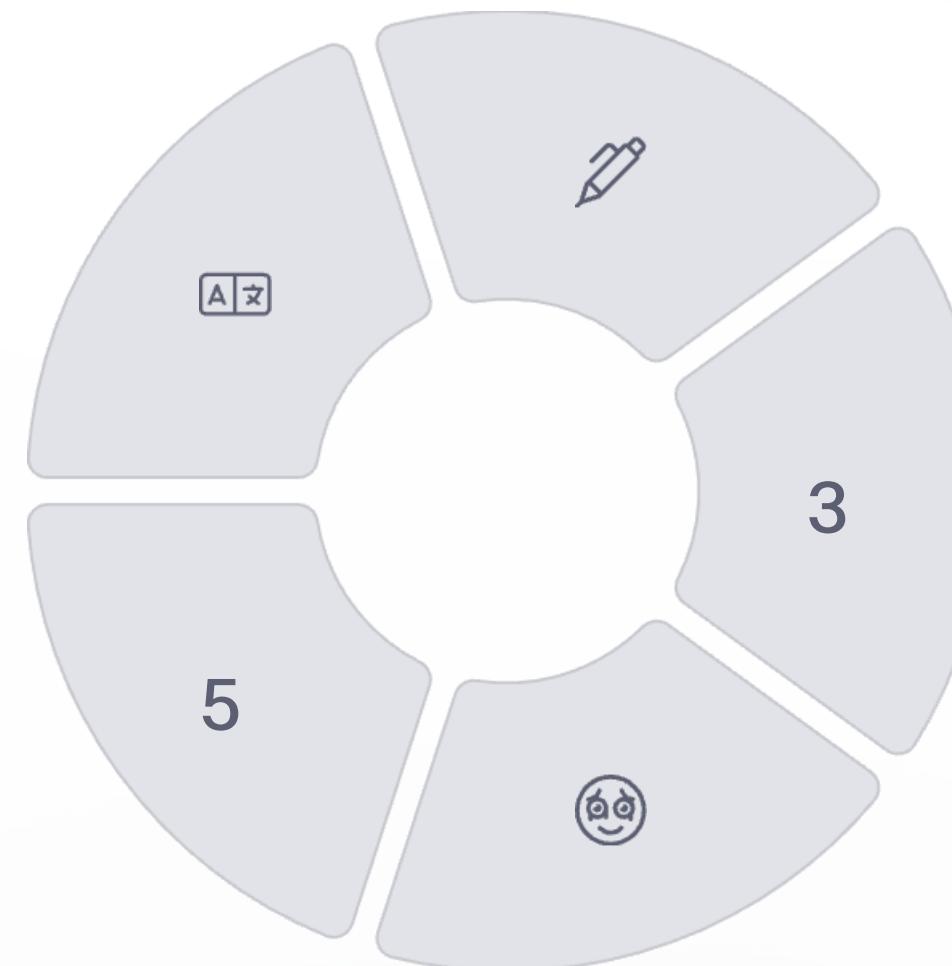
## Offer Solutions

Present clear options to resolve the issue

# Communication Barriers

**Language Differences**  
When English is not the customer's first language

**Assumptions**  
Presuming customer knowledge or understanding



- Technical Jargon**  
Using terms customers don't understand
- Environmental Distractions**  
Noise or interruptions during conversation
- Emotional Barriers**  
Customer anxiety or frustration

# Overcoming Communication Barriers



**Use Simple Language**

Avoid technical terms

**Visual Aids**

Show diagrams or demonstrations

**Confirm Understanding**

Ask if explanation is clear

**Adapt Communication Style**

Match customer's pace and style



# Non-Verbal Communication

## Body Language

Your posture, gestures, and facial expressions communicate as much as your words. Maintain open body language by avoiding crossed arms and maintaining appropriate eye contact.

## Tone of Voice

How you say something is as important as what you say. Speak clearly, calmly, and with a respectful tone even when explaining technical issues.

## Appearance

Your professional appearance communicates competence and respect for the customer before you even speak.



# Cultural Sensitivity



## Cultural Awareness

Be aware that different cultures may have different expectations regarding personal space, eye contact, and communication styles.



## Respect Customs

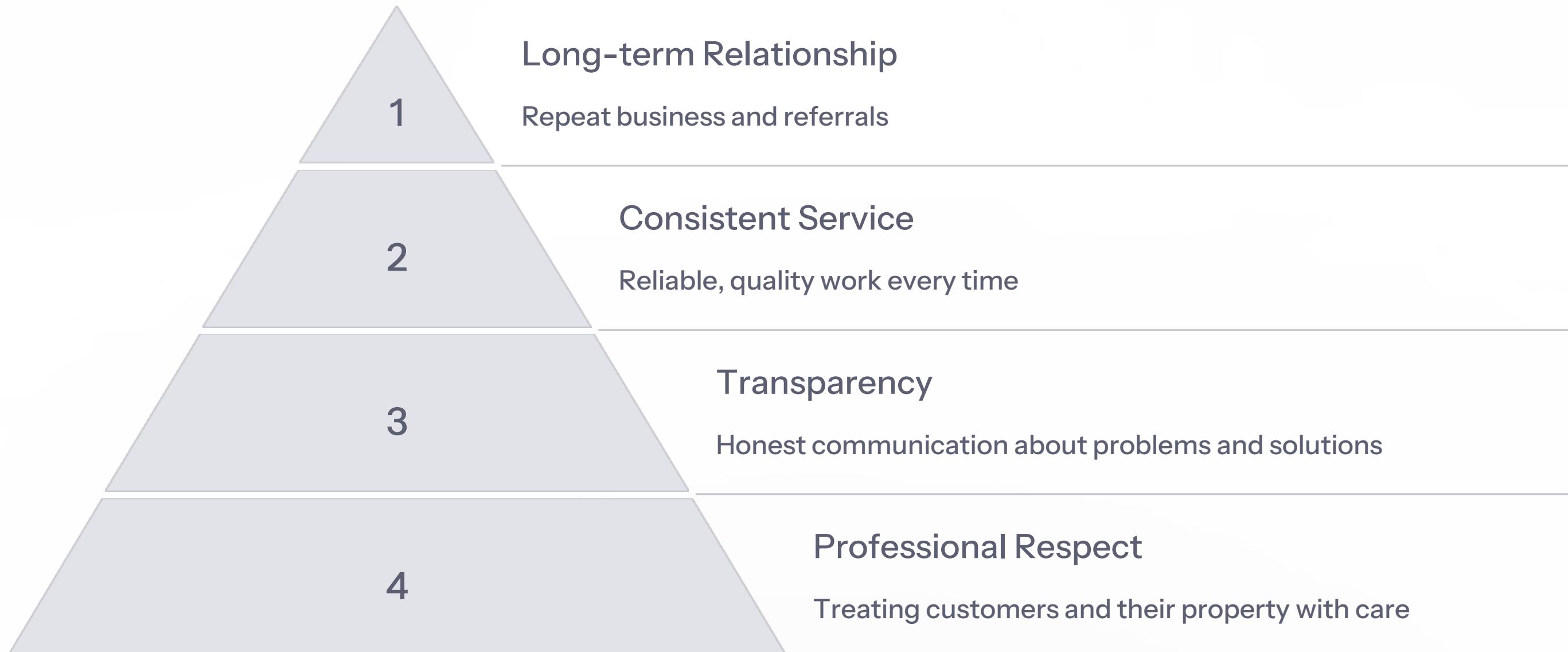
Some homes may have specific customs regarding shoes, entering certain rooms, or interacting with family members.



## Adapt Approach

Be flexible and willing to adjust your communication style to make customers from all backgrounds feel comfortable and respected.

# Building Trust with Customers



# Explaining Costs and Options

## Transparency

Always be upfront about costs before beginning work. Explain what services are needed and why they're necessary.

## Options

When possible, provide customers with different options at various price points, explaining the pros and cons of each approach.

## No Surprises

If you discover additional issues during the service call that will increase the cost, discuss this with the customer before proceeding with the additional work.



# Documentation and Follow-up

## Detailed Records

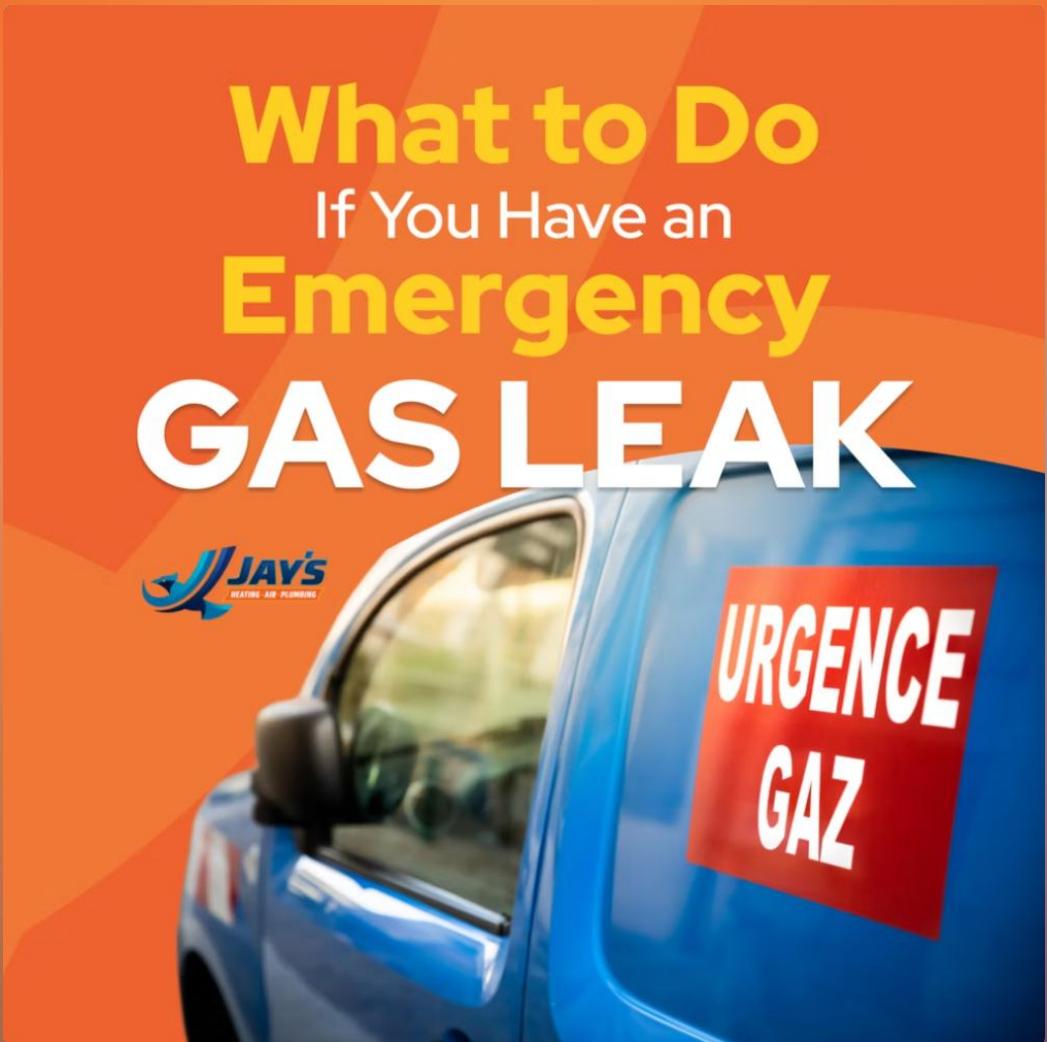
Keep thorough documentation of all work performed, parts replaced, and recommendations made.

## Written Explanations

Provide customers with written summaries of the work completed and any maintenance recommendations.

## Follow-up Contact

When appropriate, follow up with customers after major repairs to ensure everything is functioning properly.



# Emergency Situations



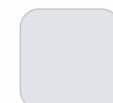
## Remain Calm

Your composure helps reassure anxious customers during gas-related emergencies.



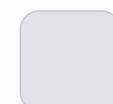
## Clear Instructions

Give simple, direct instructions about safety measures (like evacuation if necessary).



## Prioritize Safety

Always put safety first, even if it means delaying other aspects of service.



## Explain After Resolution

Once the emergency is resolved, explain what happened and how it was fixed.



# Preventive Maintenance Education

## Customer Empowerment

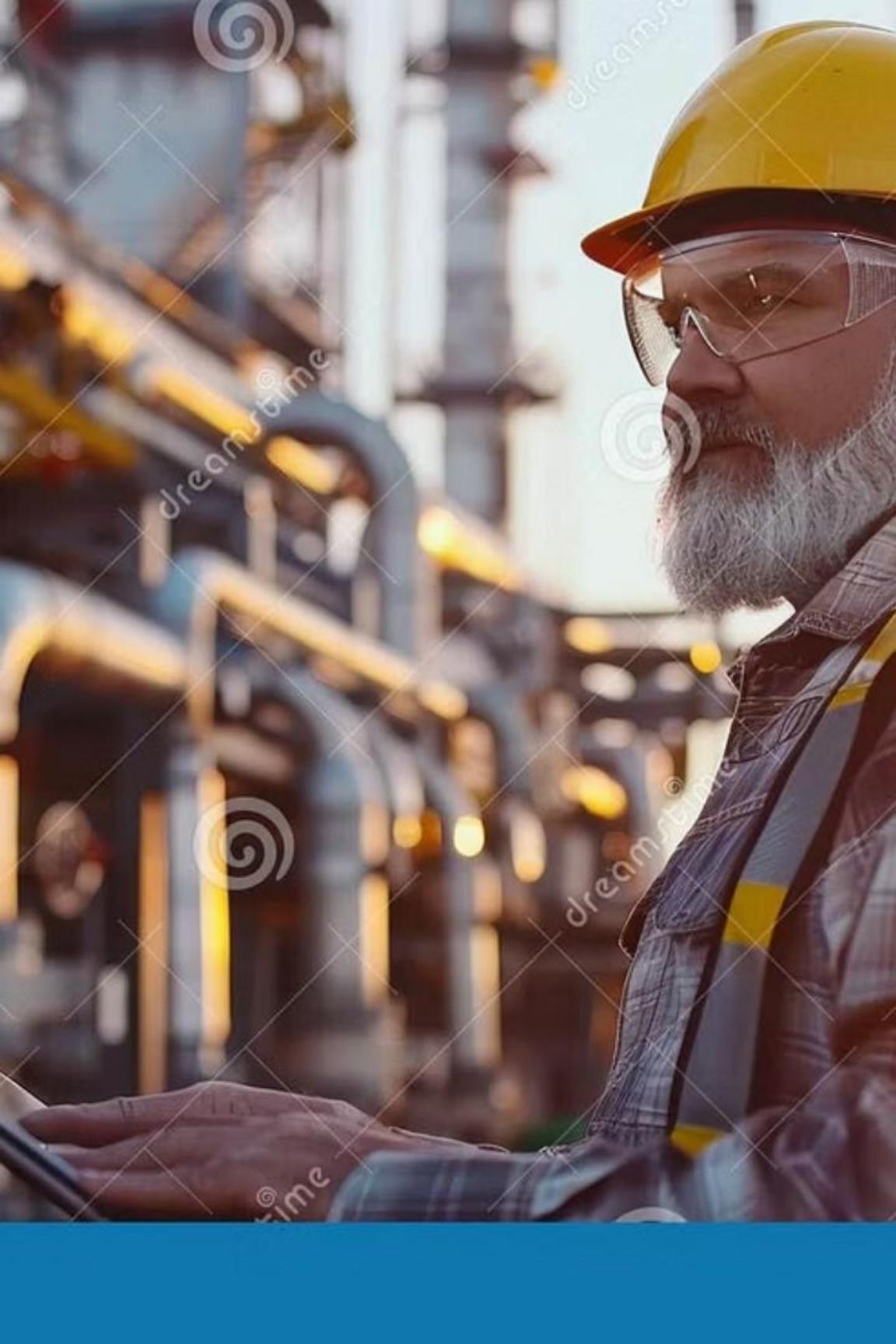
Educate customers about simple maintenance they can perform themselves, such as changing filters or recognizing warning signs.

## Safety Information

Provide information about gas safety, including how to detect gas leaks and what to do if one is suspected.

## Maintenance Schedules

Inform customers about recommended maintenance schedules for their equipment to prevent future problems.



# Technology in Customer Communication



## Digital Documentation

Using email to send service reports and maintenance recommendations



## Visual Evidence

Taking photos to show customers issues that are difficult to access or see



## Digital Resources

Using tablets to access manuals and show customers diagrams or videos



## Text Notifications

Sending arrival time updates or service reminders via text message

# Handling Customer Complaints

## Listen Without Interrupting

Allow the customer to fully express their concerns without cutting them off.

## Acknowledge the Issue

Validate their feelings and show that you understand their frustration.

## Take Responsibility

Even if you weren't personally involved, represent your company professionally.

## Offer Solutions

Present clear options to resolve the issue and follow through on promises.

# How to Handle Customer Complaints

7 STEPS

# Representing Your Company

## Brand Ambassador

Remember that you represent your company's brand and values in every interaction with customers.

## Consistent Messaging

Ensure that your communication about services, policies, and procedures aligns with your company's official positions.

## Professional Boundaries

Maintain appropriate professional boundaries while still being friendly and approachable.



# Time Management and Punctuality



## Arrive on Time

Respect customers' schedules by arriving within the promised time window.



## Communicate Delays

If you're running late, contact the customer as soon as possible with an updated arrival time.



## Realistic Timeframes

Provide honest estimates about how long repairs or installations will take.



## Work Efficiently

Respect customers' time by working efficiently while still maintaining quality.



# Safety Communication

## Explaining Hazards

Clearly communicate potential safety hazards to customers in terms they can understand.

## Safety Instructions

Provide clear instructions about what customers should or shouldn't do for their safety.

## Emergency Procedures

Ensure customers know what to do in case of gas-related emergencies, including who to contact.

# Adapting to Customer Knowledge Levels

1

## Basic Explanation

Simple terms for customers with limited technical knowledge

2

## Moderate Detail

More information for interested customers



## Technical Discussion

Detailed explanations for knowledgeable customers

# Continuous Improvement in Customer Service



# Respecting Customer Privacy



## Confidentiality

Respect the confidentiality of customer information and don't share details about their home or systems with others.



## Ask Permission

Always ask before taking photos of equipment or issues in a customer's home.



## Professional Discretion

Exercise discretion regarding what you observe in customers' homes.

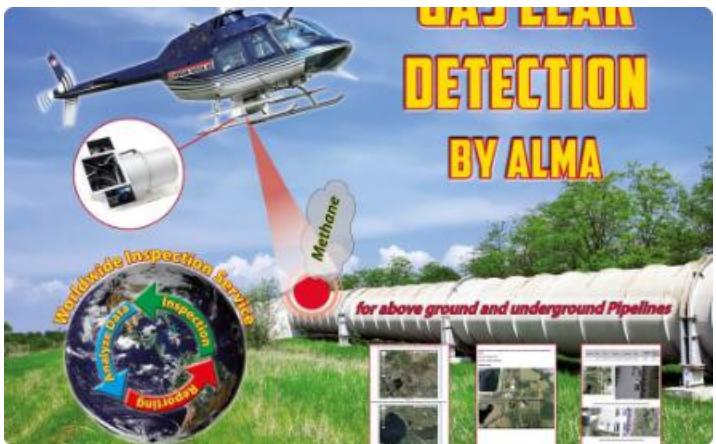


## Data Protection

Handle customer contact information and service records securely.



# Educating Customers About Gas Safety



## Detecting Gas Leaks

Teach customers how to recognize the smell of gas and what immediate steps to take if they suspect a leak.



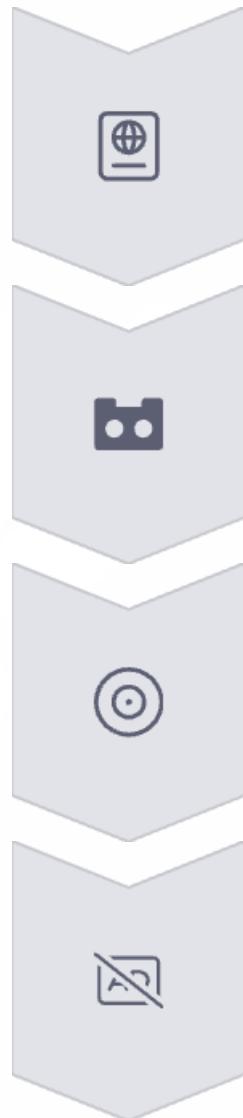
## Carbon Monoxide Safety

Explain the importance of carbon monoxide detectors and proper ventilation for gas appliances.

## Maintenance Importance

Help customers understand why regular maintenance of gas appliances is crucial for both safety and efficiency.

# Communicating Technical Information



## Identify Knowledge Level

Assess how much the customer already knows

## Simplify Complex Concepts

Break down technical information into digestible parts

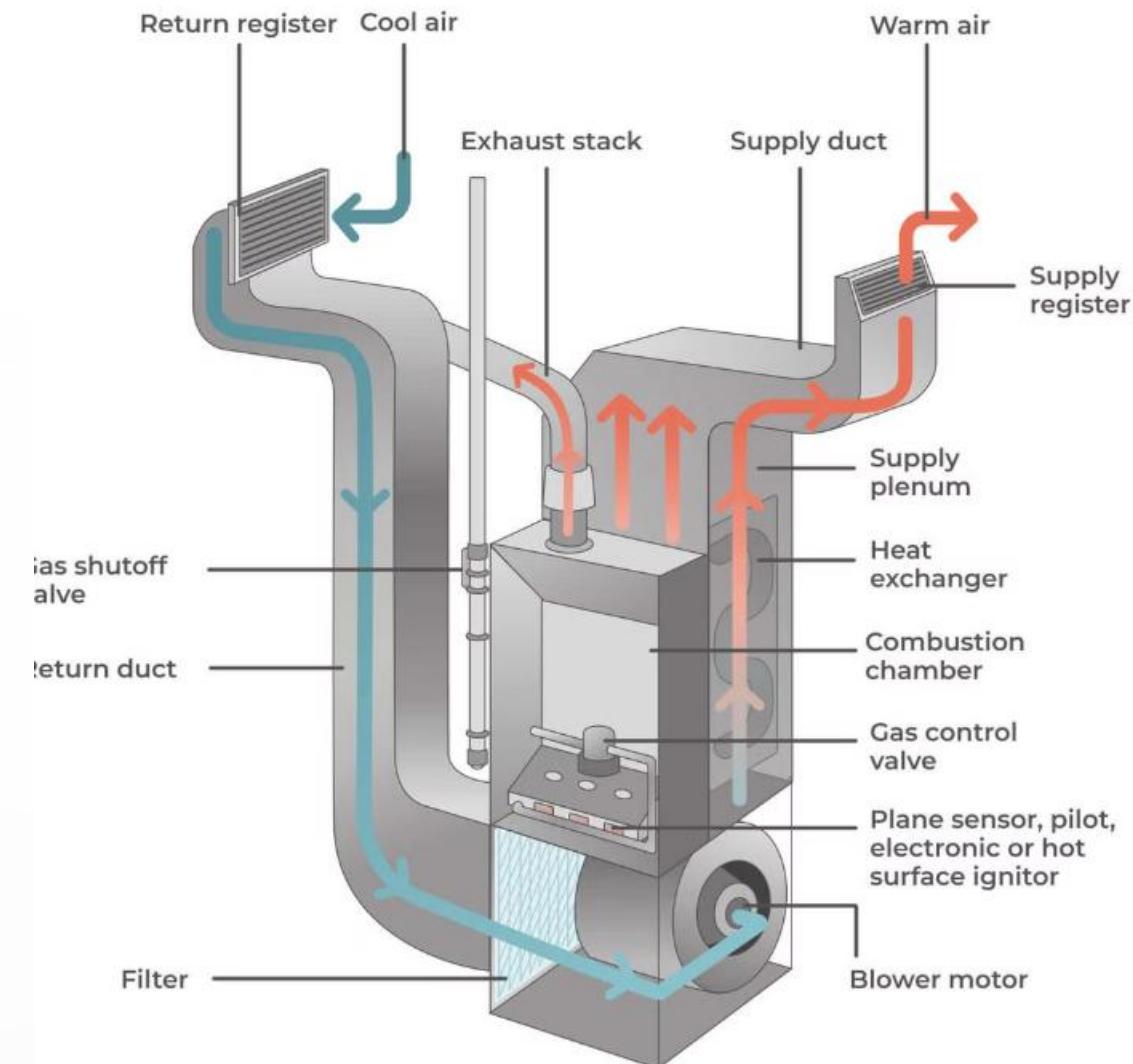
## Use Analogies

Compare technical concepts to everyday experiences

## Provide Visual Aids

Show diagrams or demonstrations when possible

## Parts of a Furnace and How They Work



# Addressing Customer Anxiety

## Recognize Fear

Understand that many customers have anxiety about gas appliances due to safety concerns.

## Provide Reassurance

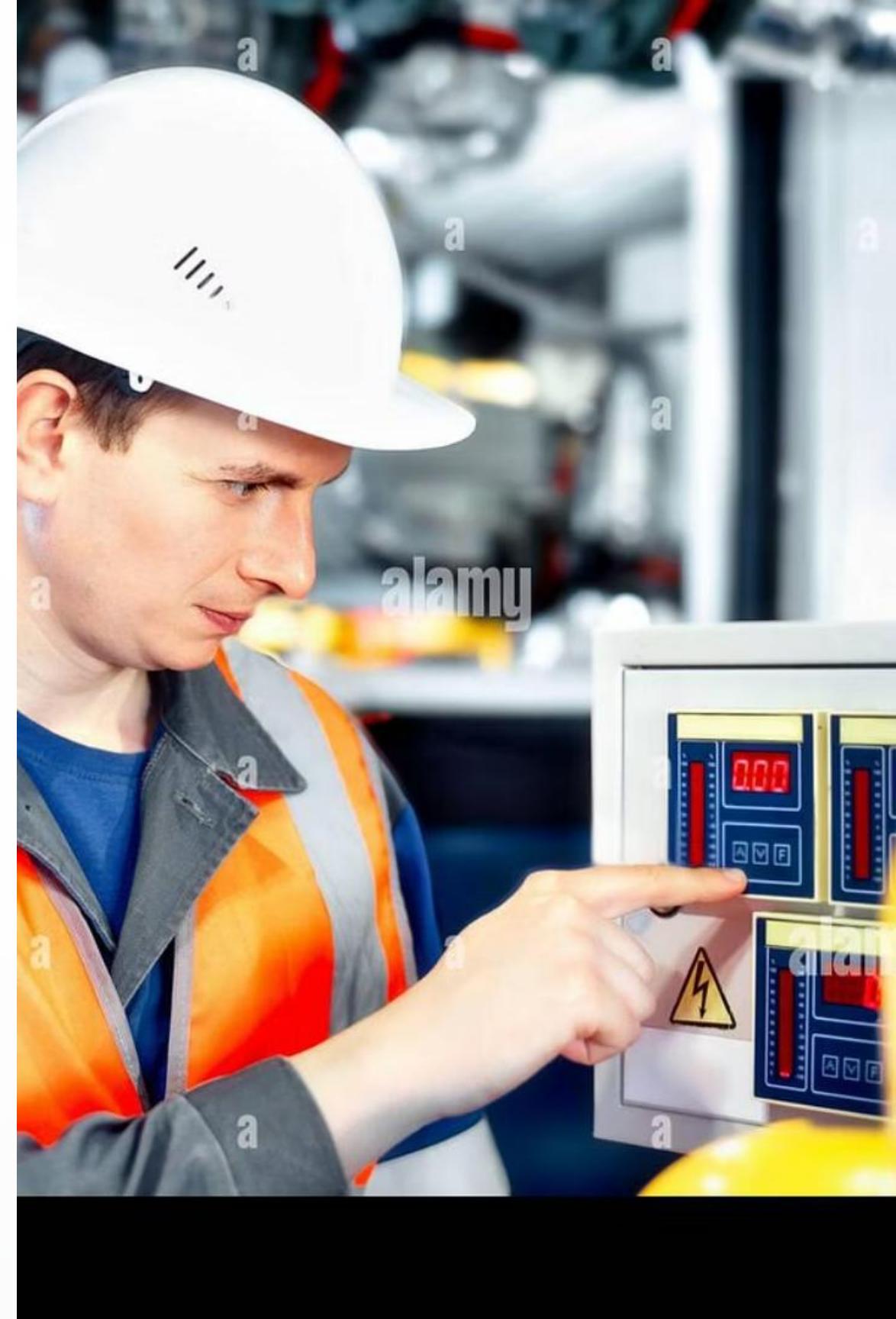
Offer factual information about safety measures and modern safety features in gas equipment.

## Demonstrate Competence

Show confidence in your skills and knowledge to help alleviate customer concerns.

## Follow Up

Check back with particularly anxious customers to ensure they feel comfortable with the work performed.



# Communicating with Different Age Groups

## Older Adults

May prefer more traditional communication styles. Speak clearly, avoid rushing, and be prepared to write down instructions. Show respect for their experience while still providing necessary information.

## Middle-Aged Adults

Often appreciate efficiency and clear explanations. Balance technical details with practical implications. May be concerned about cost-effectiveness and long-term solutions.

## Young Adults

May prefer digital communication and documentation. Often appreciate learning about new technologies and energy-efficient options. May research issues online before your arrival.



clothes

衣服



# Handling Language Barriers

## Speak Clearly

Use simple language and speak at a moderate pace without raising your voice unnecessarily.

## Use Visual Aids

Demonstrate or draw pictures to help convey information when verbal communication is difficult.

## Translation Resources

Consider using translation apps or having access to phone translation services for complex situations.

## Confirm Understanding

Ask for confirmation of understanding through demonstrations rather than just asking "Do you understand?"

# Communicating Service Schedules



## Clear Timeframes

Provide specific appointment windows rather than vague timeframes.



## Advance Notice

Send reminders before scheduled maintenance appointments.



## Status Updates

Communicate any changes to the schedule as soon as possible.



## Service Duration

Give realistic estimates of how long the service will take.



# Communicating About Energy Efficiency

## Cost Savings

Explain how proper maintenance and efficient equipment can reduce energy bills.

## Environmental Impact

For interested customers, discuss how efficiency improvements reduce environmental impact.

## Upgrade Options

When appropriate, inform customers about more efficient equipment options without using high-pressure sales tactics.

# Communicating About Regulations and Codes

## Safety Standards

Explain relevant safety codes and standards in simple terms, focusing on why they exist to protect customers.

## Compliance Requirements

Clearly communicate when equipment doesn't meet current codes and what needs to be done to address the issue.

## Documentation

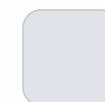
Provide proper documentation of code-compliant installations and repairs for customer records.



# Building Long-term Customer Relationships

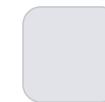


# Summary: Keys to Professional Customer Service



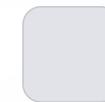
## Professional Attitude

Maintain respect, confidence, and a positive demeanor in all customer interactions.



## Professional Appearance

Present yourself with clean, well-fitting uniforms and good personal grooming.



## Workplace Behavior

Follow proper etiquette in customers' homes and workplaces.



## Effective Communication

Listen actively, explain clearly, and ensure customer understanding.



LIQUID PETROLEUM GAS

Service Technician &  
Legal Compliance



# CSA Unit 7

## Chapter 2

# Preventing Property Damage

This presentation covers methods that gas technicians and fitters can employ to prevent damage to customers' property while enhancing customer confidence and maintaining a professional image.

# Purpose and Objectives

## Purpose

Showing respect for oneself and the customer's property further enhances customer confidence and the gas technician's/fitter's professional image. This presentation describes the methods that the gas technician/fitter can employ to prevent damage to the customer's property.

## Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you will be able to:

- describe methods of preventing property damage.



# Terminology

Term	Abbreviation (symbol)	Definition
Professionalism		Conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence for the profession

# Methods of Preventing Property Damage



Parking and securing your vehicle properly



Displaying professionalism through personal cleanliness



Using tools and equipment properly



Handling and installing appliances properly



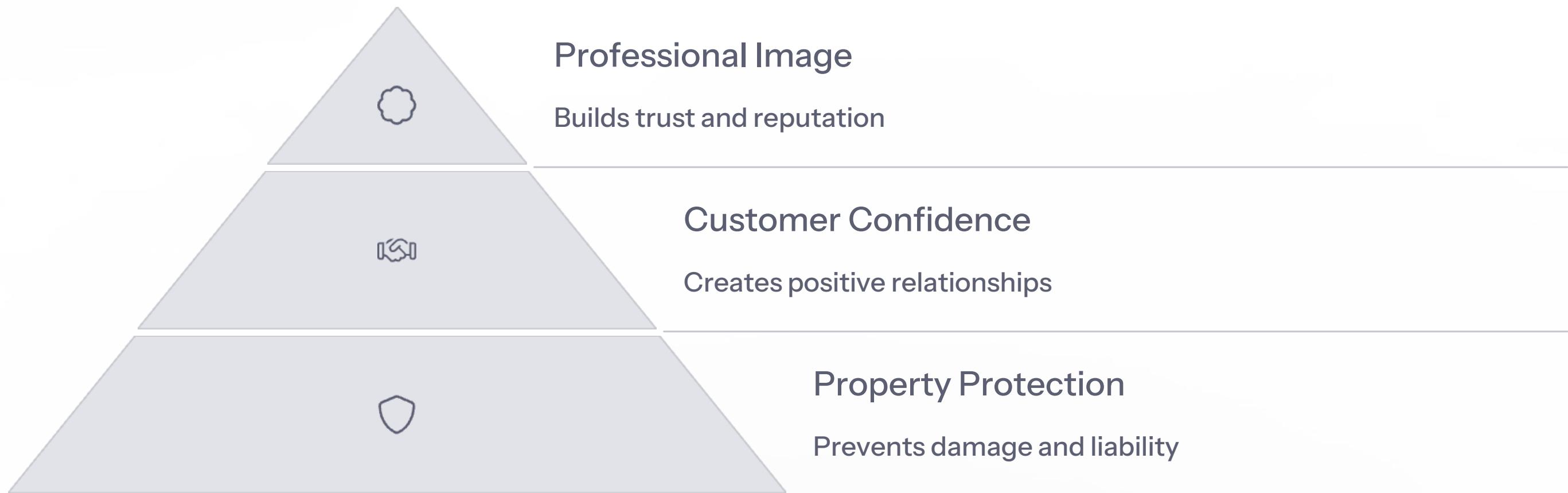
Not using a customer's tools or equipment



Cleaning up after the work is complete

# Professional Image

Showing respect for yourself and the customer's property further enhances your professionalism as well as the customer's confidence in you and the company you represent.



# Parking and Securing Vehicles Properly

Practicing proper vehicle etiquette is a means of maintaining good customer relations and projects a personal and corporate professional image to the public at large.

## Park on the street, not in the driveway

This makes the vehicle more visible to the public—which is a good advertisement.

## Prevent property damage

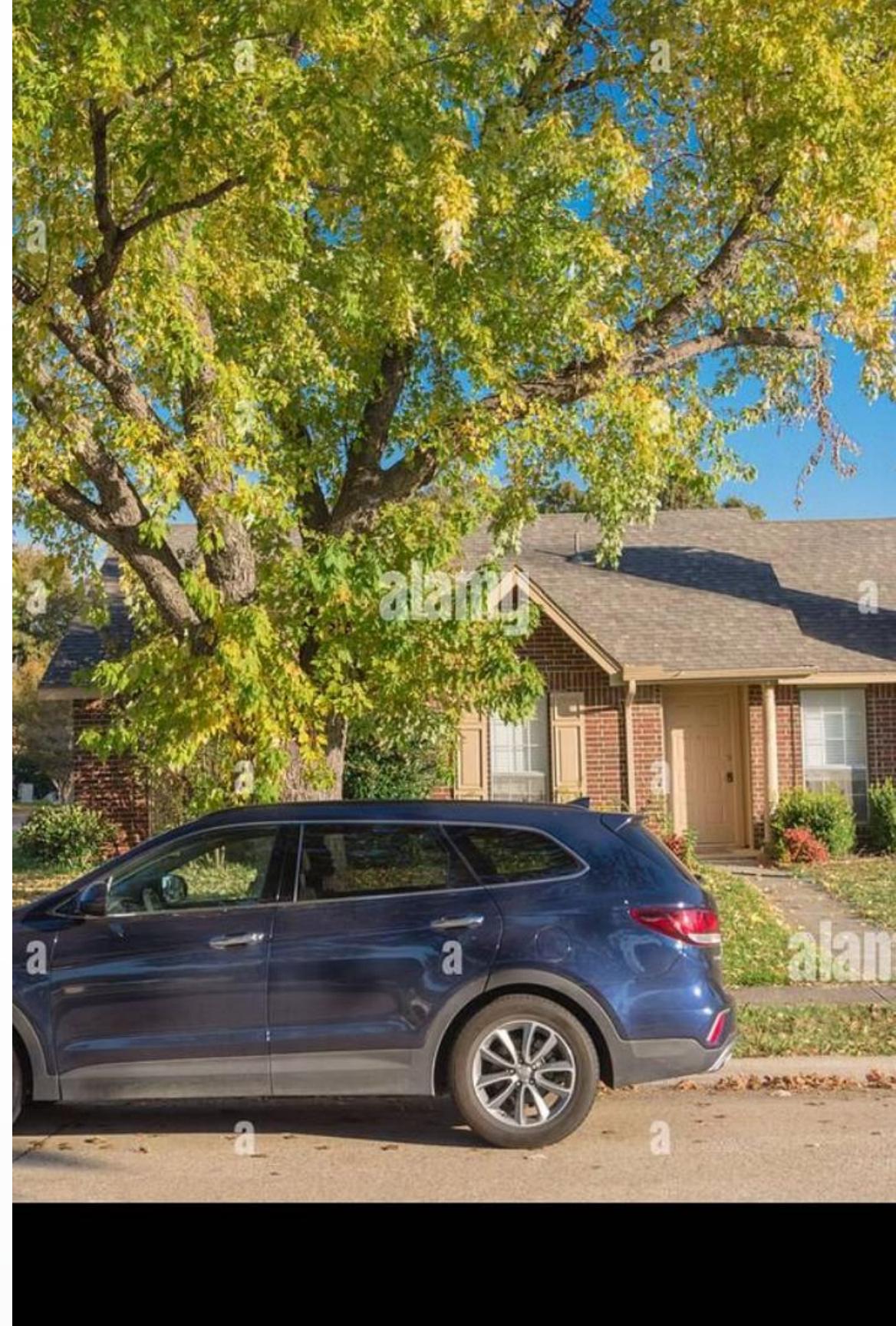
There is no chance of damaging toys, bicycles, or other objects on the driveway.

## Avoid fluid spills on property

Any oil or fluid spills from your vehicle will not damage the customer's property.

## Secure your vehicle

Children will be less likely to enter or damage the vehicle, especially if it is locked.





# Vehicle Parking Benefits



## Increased Visibility

Vehicle serves as advertisement when parked on street

## Damage Prevention

Avoids potential damage to items on customer's driveway

## Spill Protection

Prevents vehicle fluids from damaging customer property

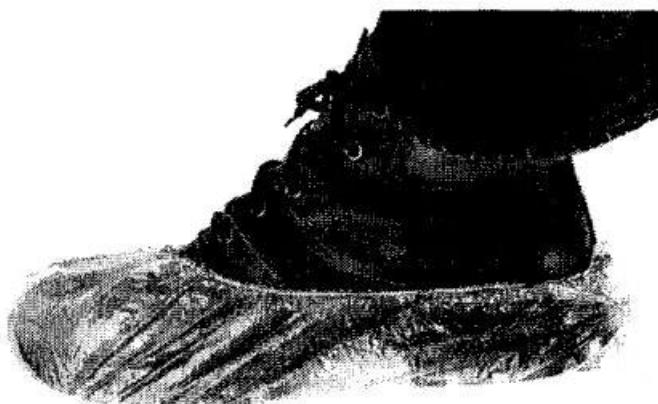
## Vehicle Security

Reduces risk of children entering or damaging vehicle

# Personal Cleanliness

## Clean Hands and Clothing

Ensure that your hands and clothing are as clean as possible. Dirty hands and clothing not only present a poor visual image of both you and the company to the customer, they can also soil and damage the customer's home and furnishings.



## Footwear Considerations

Dirty footwear can soil and damage carpets and floors. It is good practice to wear overshoes or boots that you can easily remove. This allows you to wear safety shoes or boots while working indoors.

# Displaying Professionalism Through Personal Cleanliness



## Clean Hands

Prevents soiling customer property and presents professional image



## Clean Clothing

Represents you and your company professionally



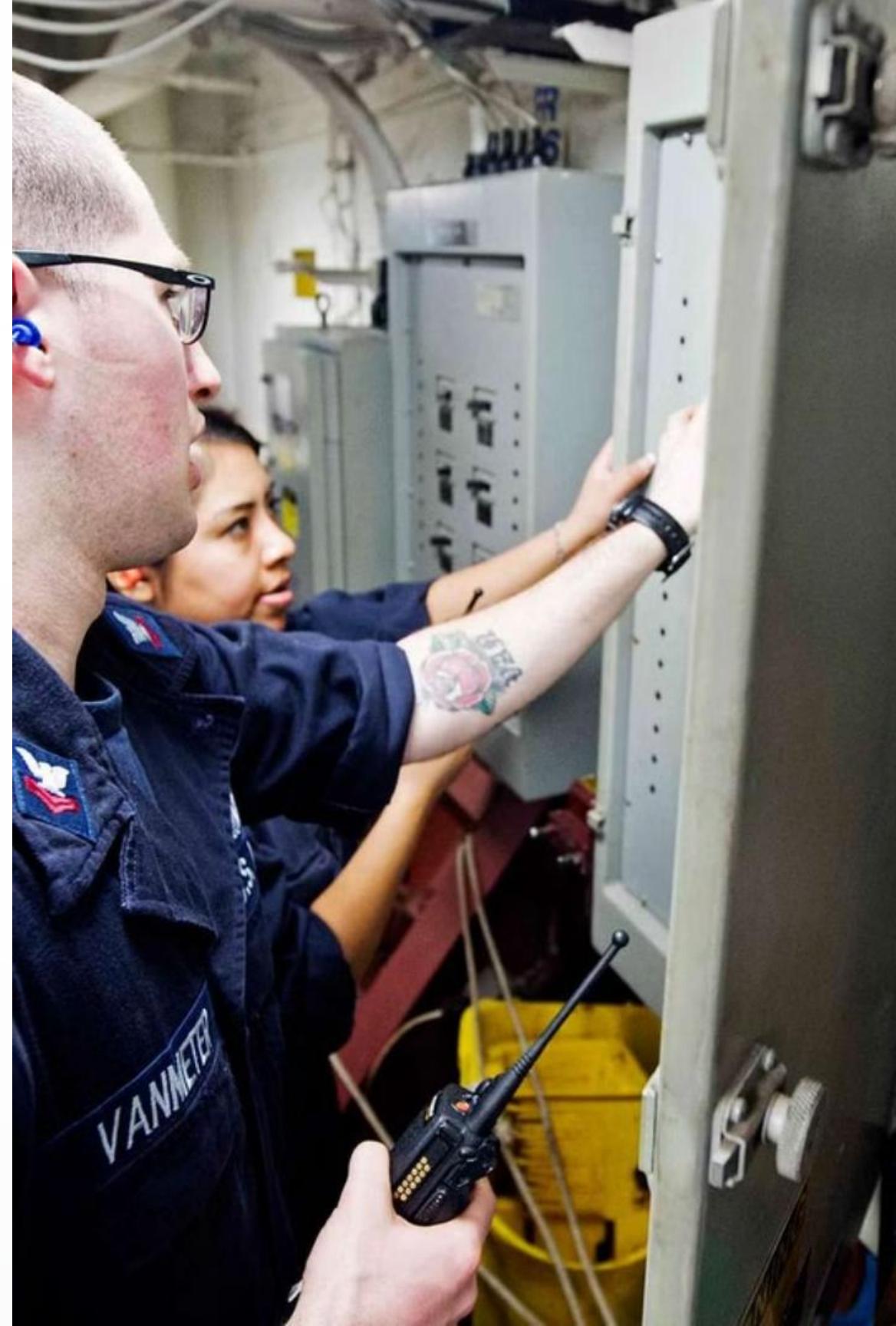
## Proper Footwear

Use removable overshoes to protect floors while maintaining safety



## Professional Appearance

Builds customer confidence and trust



# Using Tools and Equipment Properly

Careful handling of tools and equipment can prevent damage to customers' property.

Do	Do not/never
Use care and caution when carrying tools and equipment into and out of the customer's premises to avoid possible damage.	Place tools or equipment on customer's appliances, furniture, or any other object or surface that may be damaged.
When necessary, use padding to protect floors, appliances, and furnishings from damage.	Place magnetic flashlights and tools on customer's appliances, etc.-they can scratch metal surfaces.
Keep a fire extinguisher at hand when using a torch.	Unplug a customer's refrigerator or freezer to obtain power for tools.
	Leave a trouble light turned on while it is lying on the floor or near flammable materials-it can overheat and cause discoloration or fires.
	Leave unattended torches burning-they can tip over easily and cause a fire.

# Tool Handling Best Practices



## Careful Transport

Carry tools with care when entering and exiting premises



## Use Protection

Apply padding to protect surfaces when working



## Fire Safety

Keep fire extinguisher nearby when using torches

# Tool Safety Practices



**Never place tools on customer's appliances or furniture**

This can cause scratches and damage to surfaces



**Avoid magnetic tools on appliances**

Magnetic flashlights and tools can scratch metal surfaces



**Don't use customer's power outlets improperly**

Never unplug a customer's refrigerator or freezer for tool power



**Monitor trouble lights**

Don't leave trouble lights unattended on floors or near flammable materials



**Never leave torches unattended**

Unattended torches can tip over and cause fires

# Handling and Installing Appliances Properly

Before installing appliances, take careful measurements to ensure they will fit into the space provided and that there is adequate door, hall, and stairway clearance and maneuvering space. This will ensure ease of installation and reduce the possibility of damage to the customer's property.

## Measure Carefully

Ensure appliance will fit in the designated space

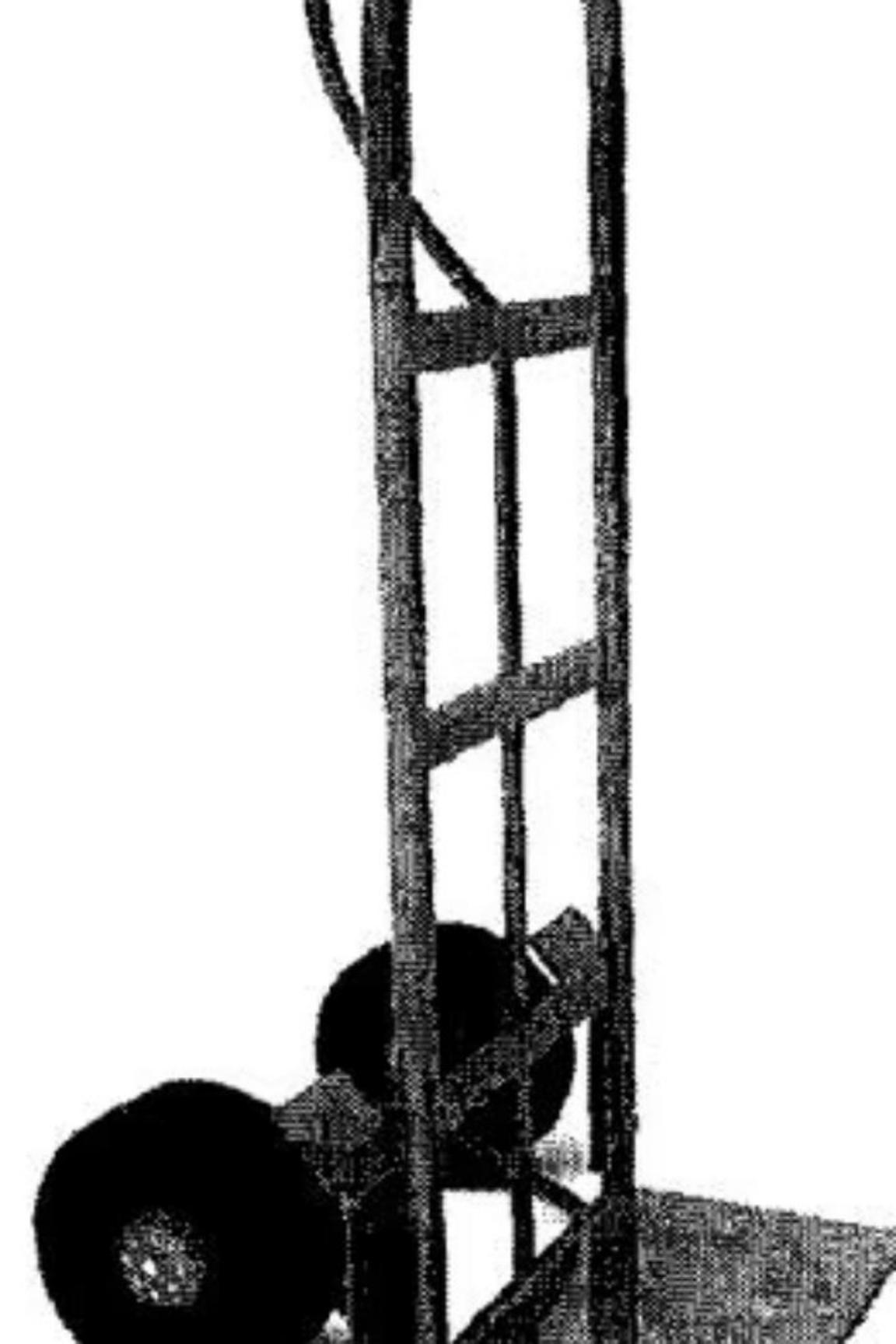
## Check Access Routes

Verify adequate clearance through doors, halls, and stairways

## Plan Installation

Map out the installation process to minimize risk of damage





# Methods to Prevent Damage When Moving Appliances



## Using Protective Pads

Place padding on surfaces to prevent scratches and dents



## Using Wheeled Carts or Dollies

Properly transport heavy appliances with appropriate equipment



## Walking Appliances

Instead of pushing and dragging, carefully "walk" appliances to their location

# Appliance Installation Process



## Measure

Take precise measurements of installation space and access routes

## Install

Carefully install appliance according to specifications

## Plan

Develop a clear plan for moving and installing the appliance

## Protect

Use appropriate protection for floors, walls, and doorways

## Transport

Move appliance using proper equipment and techniques

# Not Using Customer's Tools or Equipment

## Quality Concerns

The tools or equipment may be of inferior quality or in poor condition and unsuitable for the work.

## Safety Risks

They may break or malfunction, causing damage or personal injury that could result in an insurance claim or lawsuit.

## Replacement Liability

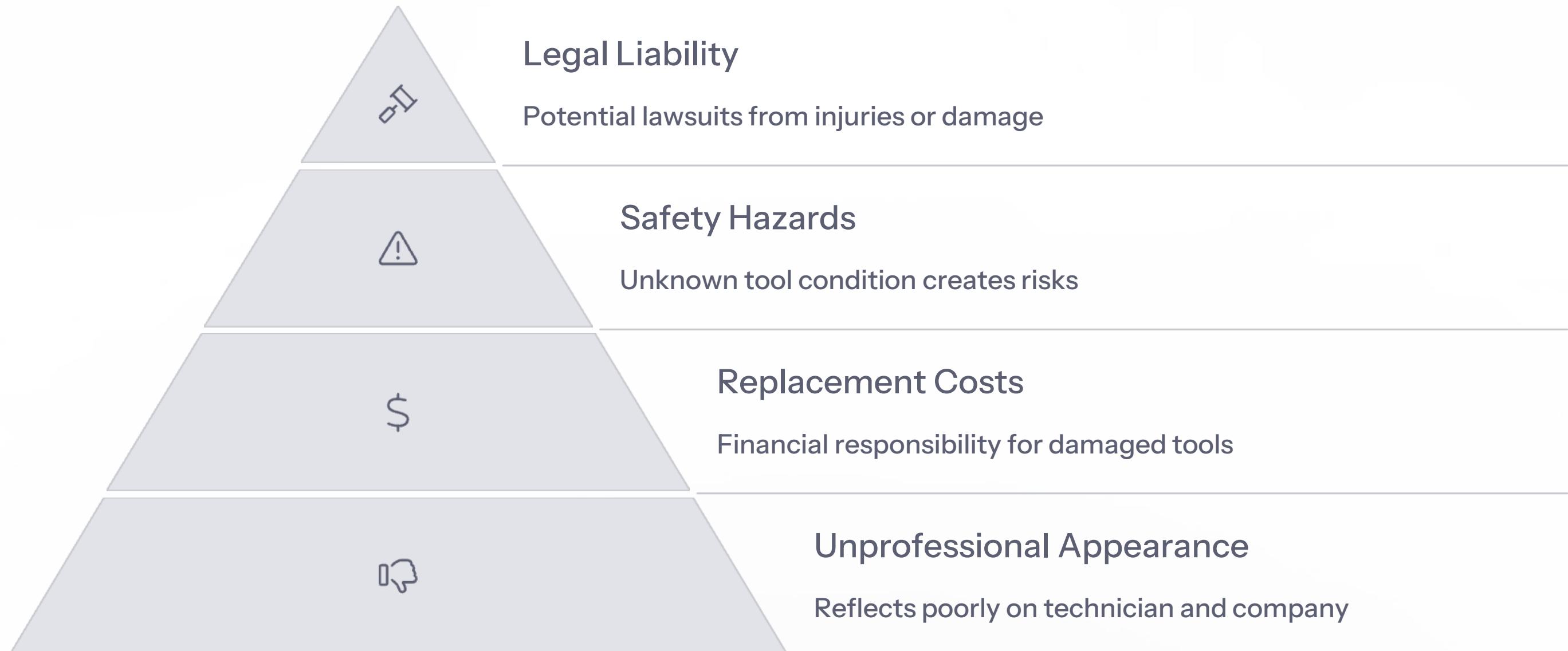
They may be lost or damaged and need replacement.

## Unprofessional Image

This creates an unprofessional presence.



# Risks of Using Customer's Tools



# Cleaning Up

It is proper practice to clean up work areas and any spills and remove all debris and cleaning materials when you finish the work.



Clean up any spills immediately



Use solvents only if they will not cause further damage



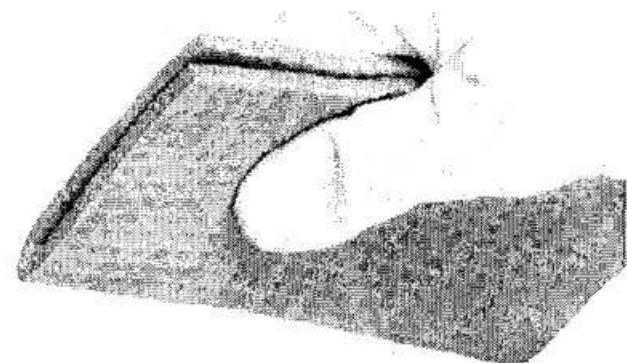
Remove and dispose of cleaning rags and cloths, etc.



Clean up excess flux and solder after performing soldering operations



Remove all crating and packaging materials





# Reporting Damage



## Incident Occurs

Damage happens to customer property

## Inform Customer

Immediately notify customer of damage

## Report to Supervisor

Contact supervisor about the incident

## Document Incident

Complete necessary paperwork

A photograph showing a man in a dark blue jumpsuit with red piping on the pockets, bending over and sweeping a concrete floor with a long-handled broom. He is in a workshop or industrial setting, with a metal cart containing various items and a potted plant visible in the background.

# Proper Cleanup Procedures

## Address Spills

Clean up any spills immediately using appropriate cleaning methods

## Remove Work Materials

Dispose of all cleaning rags, cloths, and other materials used during the job

## Clean Work Area

Ensure the work area is as clean or cleaner than when you arrived

## Remove Packaging

Take away all crating, packaging, and other debris from the premises

# Solvent Usage Guidelines

## When to Use Solvents

Use solvents for cleaning only when necessary and when they will not cause additional damage to the customer's property.

- Only use on appropriate surfaces
- Test in inconspicuous area first
- Follow manufacturer guidelines

## Solvent Safety

When using solvents, always follow proper safety procedures to protect yourself and the customer's property.

- Ensure proper ventilation
- Wear appropriate PPE
- Keep away from ignition sources
- Store and dispose of properly



# Soldering Cleanup

## Remove Excess Flux

Clean all flux residue from soldering joints and surrounding areas to prevent corrosion and ensure a professional finish.

## Clean Up Solder Drips

Carefully remove any solder drips or splatter from surfaces to prevent damage and maintain a clean work area.

## Dispose of Materials Properly

Collect and properly dispose of all cleaning materials used during the soldering cleanup process.

## Final Inspection

Thoroughly inspect the area to ensure all soldering residue has been removed and the area is clean.



# Packaging Material Removal



## Collect All Packaging

Gather all crating, boxes, plastic, and other packaging materials



## Break Down Boxes

Flatten cardboard boxes to reduce volume



## Remove From Premises

Take all packaging materials with you when leaving



## Dispose Properly

Recycle materials when possible

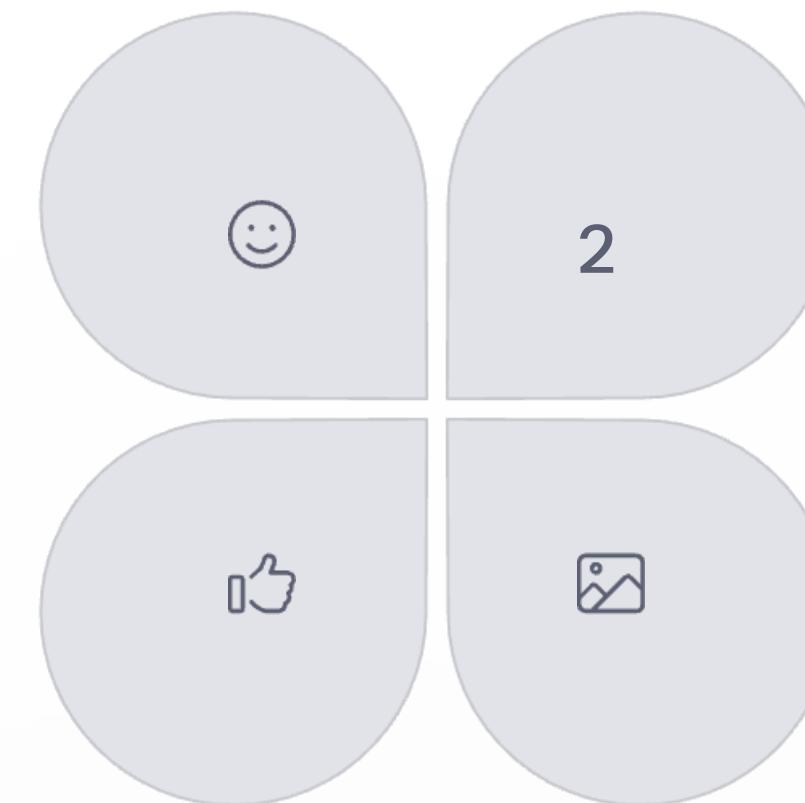
# Benefits of Proper Cleanup

## Customer Satisfaction

Leaving a clean workspace demonstrates respect for the customer's property

## Repeat Business

Satisfied customers are more likely to request your services again



## Safety

Removing debris prevents accidents and hazards

## Professional Image

Thorough cleanup enhances your professional reputation

# Damage Reporting Protocol



## Identify Damage

Recognize when damage has occurred to customer property



## Document Damage

Take photos and notes about the extent of damage



## Inform Customer

Immediately notify customer about what happened



## Contact Supervisor

Report the incident to your supervisor promptly



## Complete Report

Fill out any required incident documentation

# Professional Vehicle Appearance

## Clean Exterior

A clean, well-maintained vehicle projects a professional image to customers and the public. Regular washing and detailing help maintain this appearance.

- Wash vehicle regularly
- Remove dirt and mud promptly
- Repair any visible damage

## Organized Interior

An organized vehicle interior improves efficiency and presents a professional image when customers see inside your vehicle.

- Keep tools properly stored
- Maintain clean seating areas
- Remove trash and debris daily
- Organize paperwork and manuals



# Vehicle Organization Benefits



## Improved Efficiency

Finding tools and parts quickly saves valuable time on each job



## Reduced Lost Items

Proper organization prevents tools and parts from being misplaced



## Professional Appearance

An organized vehicle reflects positively on your professionalism



## Enhanced Safety

Secure storage prevents items from becoming projectiles during driving

# Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



## Head Protection

Wear appropriate head protection when working in areas with overhead hazards



## Eye Protection

Safety glasses or goggles protect eyes during cutting, drilling, or soldering



## Hand Protection

Gloves protect hands while maintaining cleanliness of customer property



## Foot Protection

Safety footwear with removable covers protects feet and customer floors

# Footwear Considerations

## Safety Requirements

Gas technicians must wear appropriate safety footwear that protects against hazards such as:

- Falling objects
- Punctures
- Electrical hazards
- Slips and falls

## Property Protection

To prevent damage to customer flooring while maintaining safety:

- Use removable overshoes or boot covers
- Keep a clean pair of indoor work shoes
- Remove footwear when appropriate
- Use drop cloths in work areas

# Fire Safety Precautions

## Fire Extinguisher Access

Always keep a fire extinguisher within reach when using torches or performing soldering operations.

## Flammable Material Management

Remove or protect all flammable materials in the work area before using heat-producing tools.

## Constant Supervision

Never leave torches or heat-producing tools unattended while in use.

## Proper Tool Placement

Place trouble lights and heat-producing tools on non-flammable surfaces and away from combustible materials.





# Torch Safety

## Preparation

Clear the work area of flammable materials and ensure proper ventilation before lighting a torch

## Fire Protection

Keep a fire extinguisher within immediate reach whenever using a torch

## Constant Supervision

Never leave a lit torch unattended, even for a moment

## Proper Storage

Allow torch to cool completely before storing and secure gas cylinders properly

# Electrical Safety



## Use your own power sources

Never unplug customer appliances like refrigerators or freezers for tool power



## Consider battery-powered tools

Reduces need for customer power outlets and trip hazards from cords



## Manage cords properly

Keep cords away from walkways and water sources



## Monitor trouble lights

Never leave trouble lights unattended or near flammable materials



# Surface Protection Methods



Using appropriate protection methods for floors, walls, furniture, and doorways prevents damage during installation and service work.

# Appliance Moving Equipment



## Appliance Dolly

Specially designed dollies with straps secure appliances during transport and feature proper padding to prevent damage to both the appliance and customer property.



## Furniture Sliders

Placed under appliance corners to allow smooth movement across floors without scratching or damaging surfaces.



## Shoulder Straps

Ergonomic straps that distribute weight and allow technicians to safely lift and maneuver appliances without dragging them across floors.



# Walking Appliances Technique

## Proper Positioning

Position technicians on opposite sides of the appliance with firm grip on secure handling points

## Coordinated Movement

Tilt appliance slightly to one corner, then move that corner forward in the direction of travel

## Alternate Corners

Shift weight to opposite corner and move that corner forward, creating a walking motion

## Small Movements

Make small, controlled movements rather than attempting to move long distances at once

# Pre-Installation Measurements



## Appliance Dimensions

Measure width, height, and depth of the appliance



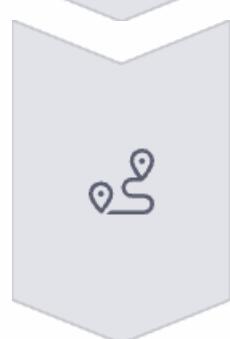
## Access Points

Measure all doorways, hallways, and stairways along delivery path



## Installation Space

Measure the final installation location with clearance for ventilation



## Turning Radius

Calculate space needed for corners and turns along the delivery path



# Professional Tool Organization



## Proper Tool Storage

Keeping tools organized in appropriate bags or cases prevents damage to both the tools and customer property during transport and use.



## Tool Belts

Using a tool belt for frequently used items keeps hands free and prevents the need to place tools on customer surfaces.



## Portable Work Surfaces

Bringing your own work surface or mat provides a place to set tools without using customer furniture or appliances.

# Spill Response Protocol

**Identify Spill**  
Quickly recognize when a spill has occurred

## Dispose Properly

Properly dispose of cleaning materials



## Contain Spill

Prevent spill from spreading to larger area

## Clean Immediately

Use appropriate materials to clean spill

## Verify Removal

Ensure all residue is completely removed

# Spill Cleaning Supplies



## Absorbent Materials

Keep clean rags, paper towels, and specialized absorbent pads to quickly contain and clean up liquid spills.

## Appropriate Cleaners

Carry mild, non-damaging cleaning solutions that are safe for various surfaces and effective for the types of substances you commonly use.

## Containment Tools

Small barriers or trays can help contain spills and prevent them from spreading to larger areas.

## Disposal Bags

Proper bags for containing used cleaning materials and preventing further contamination.

# Communication with Customers

## Before Work Begins

Communicate clearly with customers about:

- Areas where you'll be working
- Potential disruptions
- Precautions you'll take to protect property
- Estimated completion time

## During the Job

Keep customers informed about:

- Progress updates
- Any unexpected issues
- Additional work that may be needed
- Changes to completion timeline

# Customer Communication Benefits



# Professional Appearance Elements

## Clean Uniform

Properly maintained company uniform  
that is clean and presentable



## Appropriate Footwear

Clean, professional footwear with  
protective covers when needed

## Identification

Visible company ID badge or name tag  
for security and professionalism

## Personal Hygiene

Clean hands, trimmed nails, and good  
overall hygiene

# Benefits of Professional Appearance

**93%**

**Customer Trust**

Percentage of customers who say appearance influences their trust in service providers

**78%**

**Positive Perception**

Customers who associate clean appearance with quality workmanship

**65%**

**Repeat Business**

Increased likelihood of repeat business from customers served by well-presented technicians



# Uniform Maintenance



## Daily Inspection

Check uniform for stains, tears, or wear before each workday



## Regular Cleaning

Wash uniforms according to company guidelines to maintain appearance



## Proper Pressing

Keep uniforms pressed and wrinkle-free for professional appearance



## Rotation System

Maintain multiple sets of uniforms to ensure clean options are always available



# Preventing Damage During Soldering

## Heat Shields

Use appropriate heat shields to protect surrounding surfaces from heat damage during soldering operations.

## Proper Work Surface

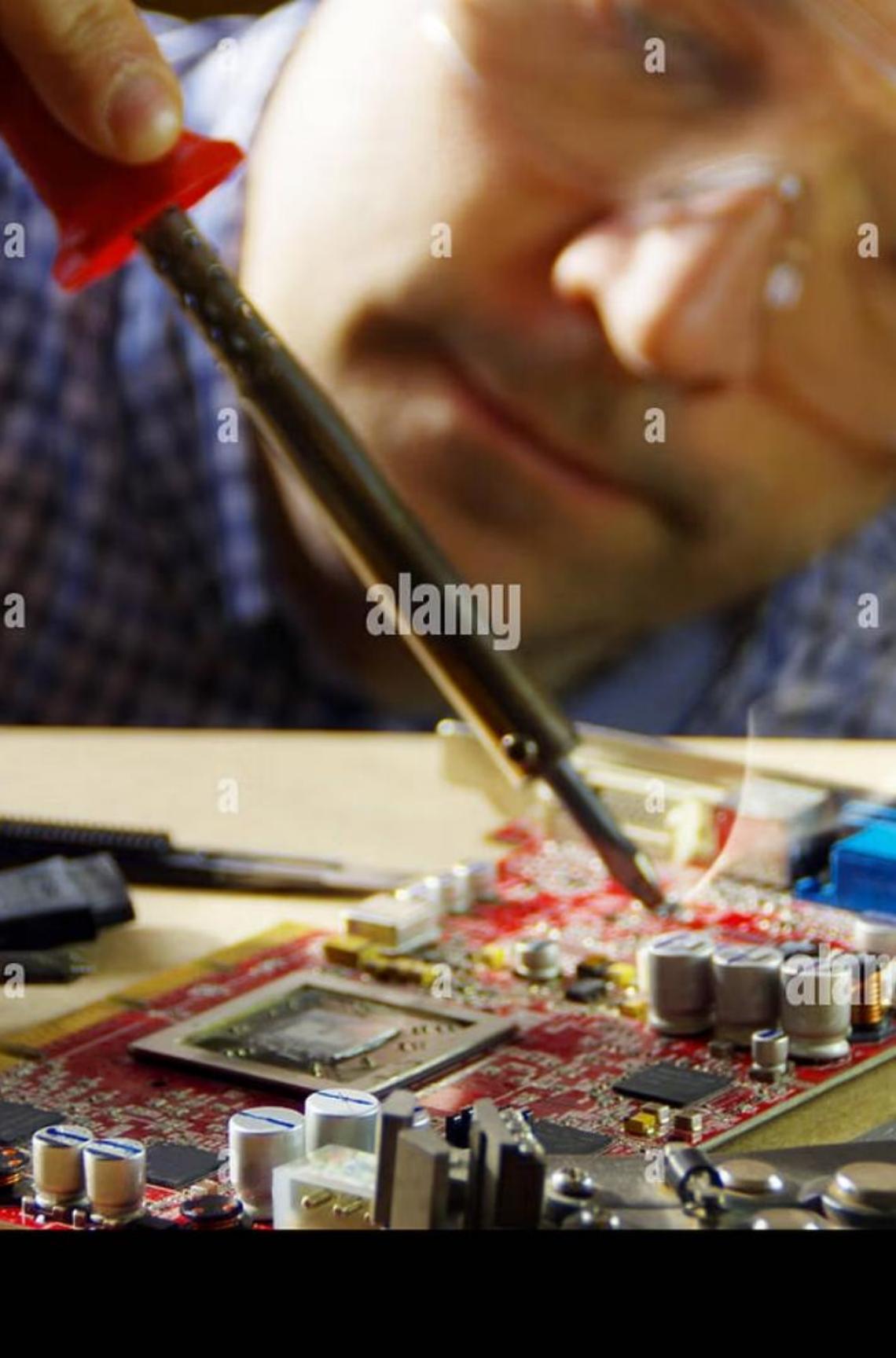
Always use a proper heat-resistant work surface rather than customer furniture or flooring.

## Flux Control

Apply flux carefully to prevent drips and spills that can damage surfaces and leave residue.

## Immediate Cleanup

Clean up excess flux and solder immediately after completing work to prevent corrosion and staining.



# Protecting Electronic Components

## Static Prevention

When working with electronic components in gas appliances:

- Use anti-static wrist straps
- Work on anti-static mats
- Avoid touching sensitive components
- Ground yourself before handling electronics

## Moisture Protection

Protect electronic components from moisture damage:

- Keep liquids away from work area
- Cover components during cleaning
- Use appropriate cleaning methods
- Ensure components are dry before powering on

# Floor Protection Methods



## Drop Cloths

Heavy-duty, non-slip drop cloths provide protection for larger work areas and can absorb small spills while preventing dirt and debris from contacting flooring.



## Plastic Runners

Clear plastic runners provide a waterproof barrier that allows visibility of the floor beneath while protecting against spills, dirt, and tool damage.



## Boot Covers

Disposable or reusable boot covers allow technicians to maintain safety footwear while preventing tracking of dirt and debris onto customer flooring.

# Wall and Door Protection



## Door Frame Protectors

Foam or fabric covers that prevent scratches and dents when moving appliances through doorways



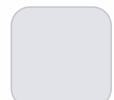
## Corner Guards

Protective covers for wall corners in high-traffic areas during installation



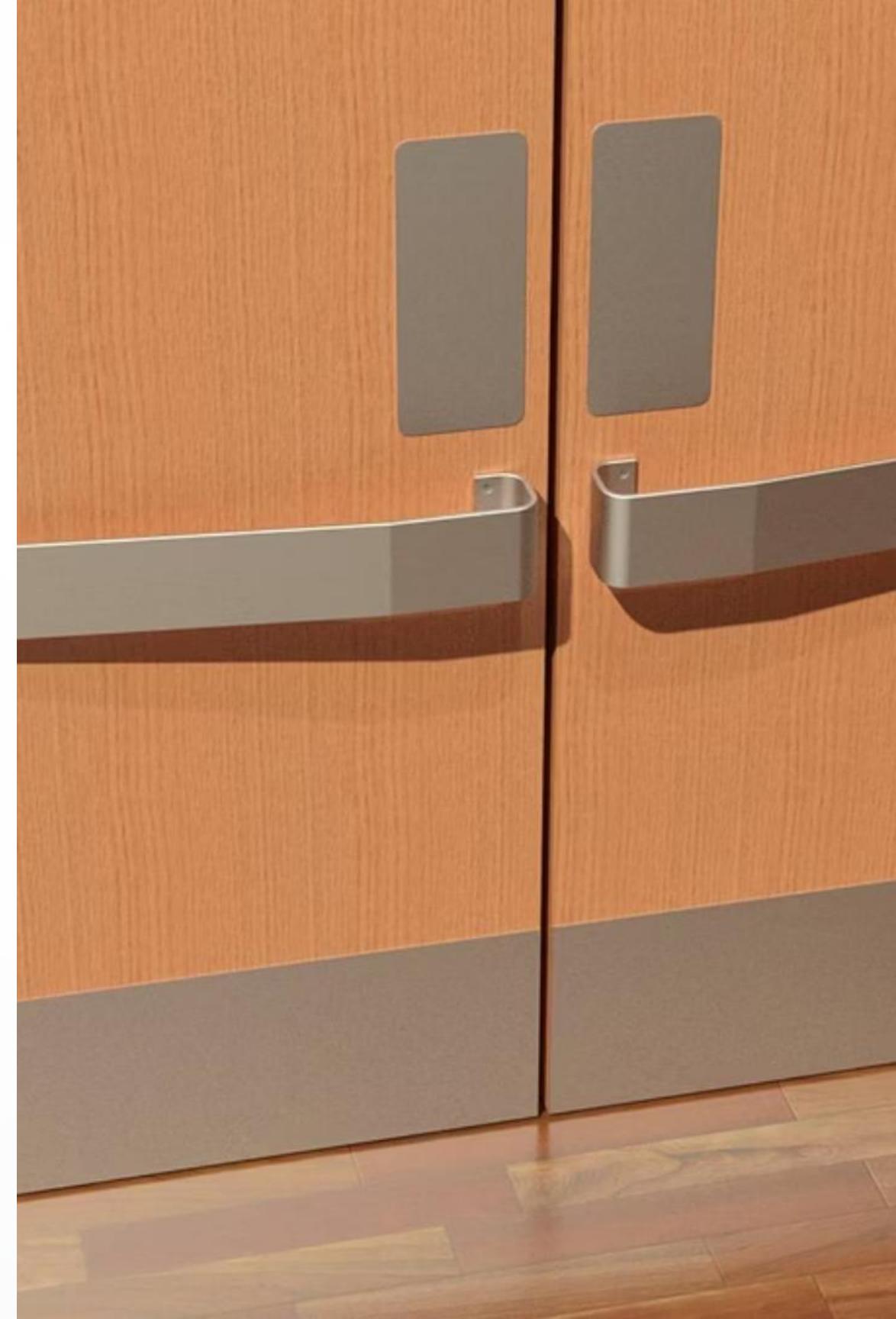
## Wall Shields

Temporary protective barriers to prevent wall damage from tools or equipment



## Furniture Bumpers

Soft pads to prevent damage when moving furniture or appliances near walls



# Professionalism Benefits



## Personal Pride

Take satisfaction in quality work and professional conduct



## Customer Satisfaction

Create positive experiences that lead to customer loyalty



## Company Reputation

Contribute to the positive image of your organization



## Industry Standing

Elevate the perception of the entire gas technician profession

# Summary: Preventing Property Damage

## Vehicle Management

Park properly and maintain a professional vehicle appearance

## Thorough Cleanup

Leave work areas clean and remove all debris



## Personal Presentation

Maintain clean appearance and proper protective equipment

## Tool Handling

Use tools properly and never use customer's equipment

## Appliance Care

Move and install appliances using proper techniques

# CSA Unit 7

## Chapter 3 Dealing with Difficult Customers

This presentation covers the basic skills that are vital for identifying and dealing with difficult customers and situations. Gas technicians/fitters often work in potentially hostile environments, and when arriving at a service call, can generally expect customers to be irritable and concerned rather than warm and friendly. Learning how to recognize and handle difficult situations effectively is essential for providing quality service.



# Objectives



## Deal with customer complaints

Learn effective techniques to address and resolve customer complaints professionally



## Handle difficult customers

Develop techniques for managing challenging customer interactions



## Identify customer types

Recognize different types of difficult customers and appropriate responses



## Recognize high-risk situations

Identify potentially dangerous scenarios and appropriate safety measures

# Key Terminology



Term	Abbreviation (symbol)	Definition
Non-verbal communication		Sending and receiving messages through facial expression, tone of voice, and body language
Verbal communication		Sending and receiving messages through words

# Understanding Customer Behavior

## Customer Expectations

A spirit of cooperation can help solve every problem. Using the cooperative approach, you and the customer should usually be able to come up with a win-win solution to the problem.

An upset customer is different from a difficult customer. An upset customer may have moments of unreasonable behaviour, but still be basically rational.

## Difficult Customers

Difficult people are chronically hard to communicate with as a result of a psychological need to get attention through disruptive and negative means.

Some customers will insist on being unreasonable no matter what you do for them. You must have patience. On these occasions, you would be well-advised to call in your supervisor.

# Why Customer Interactions Go Wrong

## You seem not to care

You don't sound or look as if you care, are concerned, or appreciate the customer's situation. Although you may care, you really need to say caring words and look and sound as if you care. After all, the customer can't read your mind.

## You don't listen

Too often we try to jump in with solutions and don't allow the customer to vent their feelings. Again, you need to show the customer that you're listening by your body language as well as what you say and how you say it.

## You let the customer "get to you"

Sometimes we allow the customer's attitude to irritate or annoy us. When this becomes obvious to the customer, again through our tone of voice or body language, it only fuels bad feelings.

# More Reasons Interactions Go Wrong

You use the wrong words

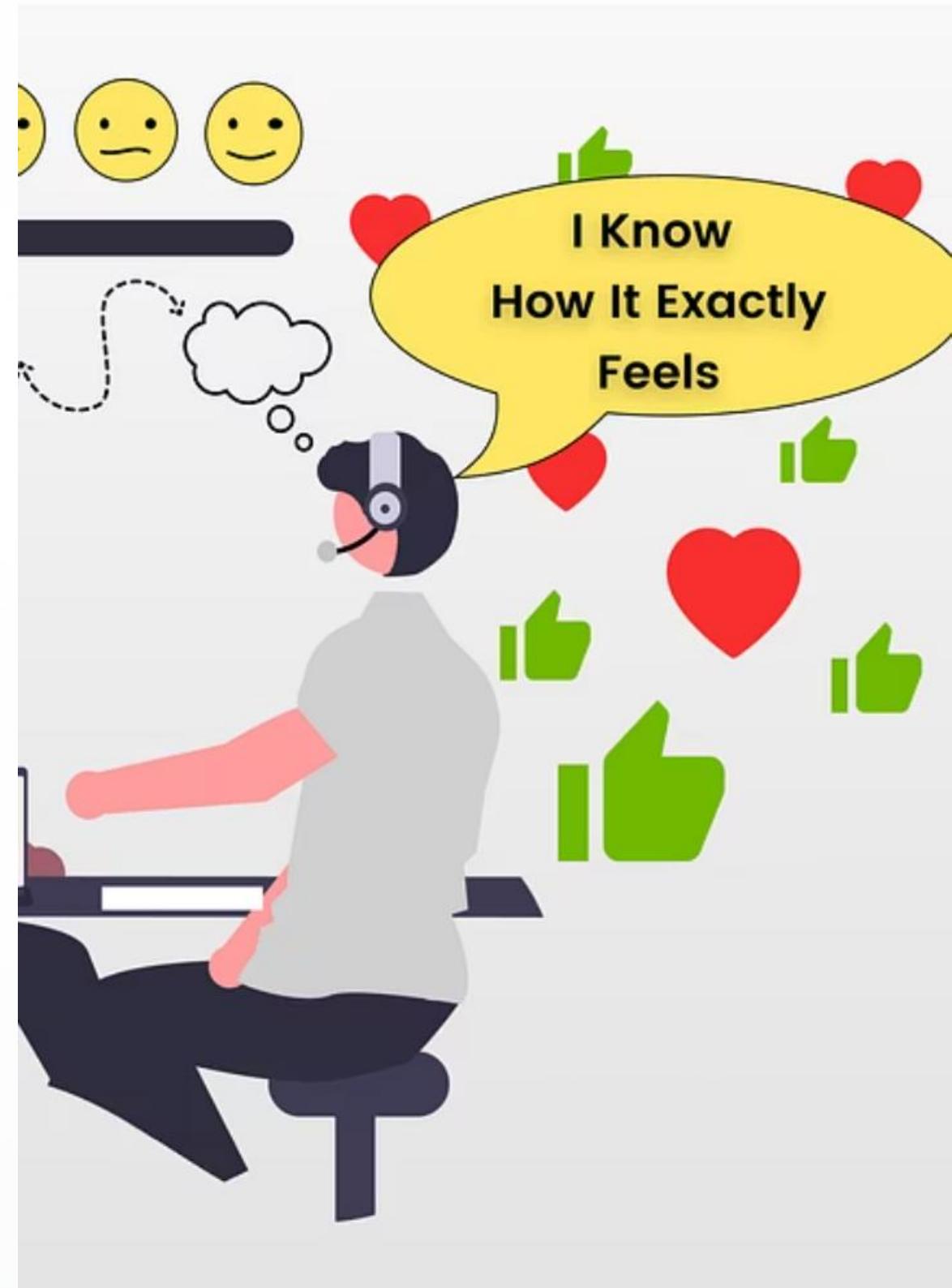
There are certain trigger words that cause a customer to become more difficult. Some of these are "can't, have to, sorry about that". Even industry jargon can have a negative effect on a customer interaction.

You don't see it from the customer's point of view

Too often service personnel think the customer is making too much of a fuss.

Importance of recovery

Customers will often judge the level of your service based on how well you recover from a difficult situation. They are very likely to forgive you if you end the interaction on a positive note.





# What Upset Customers Want



Someone to listen to them

Use effective listening techniques to assure the customer of your attentiveness to the problem.



Someone to treat them with respect

Do not be arrogant or condescending in your words or actions.



Someone to take their problem seriously

Respond to the customer in a confident, serious, professional manner.



Someone to solve their problem immediately

Act as quickly as circumstances permit to solve the customer's problem.

# Focusing on the Problem

1

## Determine customer priorities

Determine whether the customer is more interested in having someone listen to them or in immediate action, and respond appropriately.

2

## Focus on solutions, not people

In all discussions with difficult customers, focus on the problem and its solution and not on the persons involved.

3

## Maintain company loyalty

Do not encourage or agree with a customer who criticizes your company or its management.

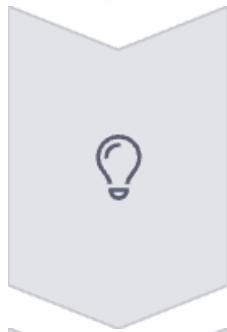
4

## Identify and confirm the issue

Identify the cause of the customer's distress and recap it to show your understanding.



# Resolving the Problem



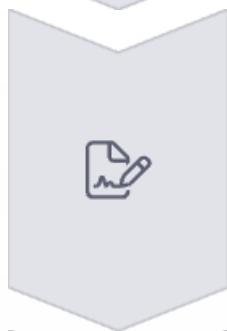
## Propose a solution

Propose a solution to the problem and discuss it with the customer.



## Confirm acceptance

Confirm that the proposed solution is acceptable to the customer.



## Get authorization

Have the customer sign an authorization form before commencing work.



## Follow up

Perform a follow-up after the work is complete to ensure the customer is still satisfied.





# Steps to Resolving a Problem

## Listen to the customer

Give your full attention and allow the customer to express their concerns.

## Show empathy with the customer

Demonstrate that you understand their feelings and perspective.

## Clarify the problem

Ensure you fully understand the issue by asking questions and restating the problem.

## Develop a cooperative approach

Work together with the customer to find a mutually acceptable solution.

# Effective Listening Techniques

## Do

- Listen for the feelings as well as the facts the speaker is trying to express
- Take brief notes of important details, but still maintain regular eye contact if speaking in person
- Eliminate distractions that may interfere with your conversation



## Do Not

- Criticize the speaker and his or her manner of speaking
- Fake attention—let your actions show the speaker that you are attentive to them

# Characteristics of a Good Listener

A good listener does not

- Assume anything
- Take a know-it-all attitude
- Talk too much
- Give out too much information
- Take what the speaker is saying personally

But will

- Get the facts
- Listen respectfully
- Let the customer speak
- Keep his or her responses short and simple
- Maintain a professional attitude at all times



# Showing Empathy

## Unacceptable response

"You are crazy."

"I know how you feel."

"Boy, are you mad."

"I don't know why you are so upset."

## Good way to respond

"I appreciate what you are saying."

"I can understand why you feel that way" or "I can understand how that would be annoying for you."

"I can see how you would be upset."

"If it were me, I would be upset too" or "I am sorry for the inconvenience we have caused."



# Clarifying the Problem

## Unacceptable response

"You're way off base."

"You are not making any sense."

"That is definitely wrong."

"Did you really say..."

## Good way to respond

"What it sounds like you are saying is..."

"Maybe I am not understanding you correctly."

"Let me see if I have this straight."

"This is what I understood you to say."

# Developing a Cooperative Approach

## Unacceptable response

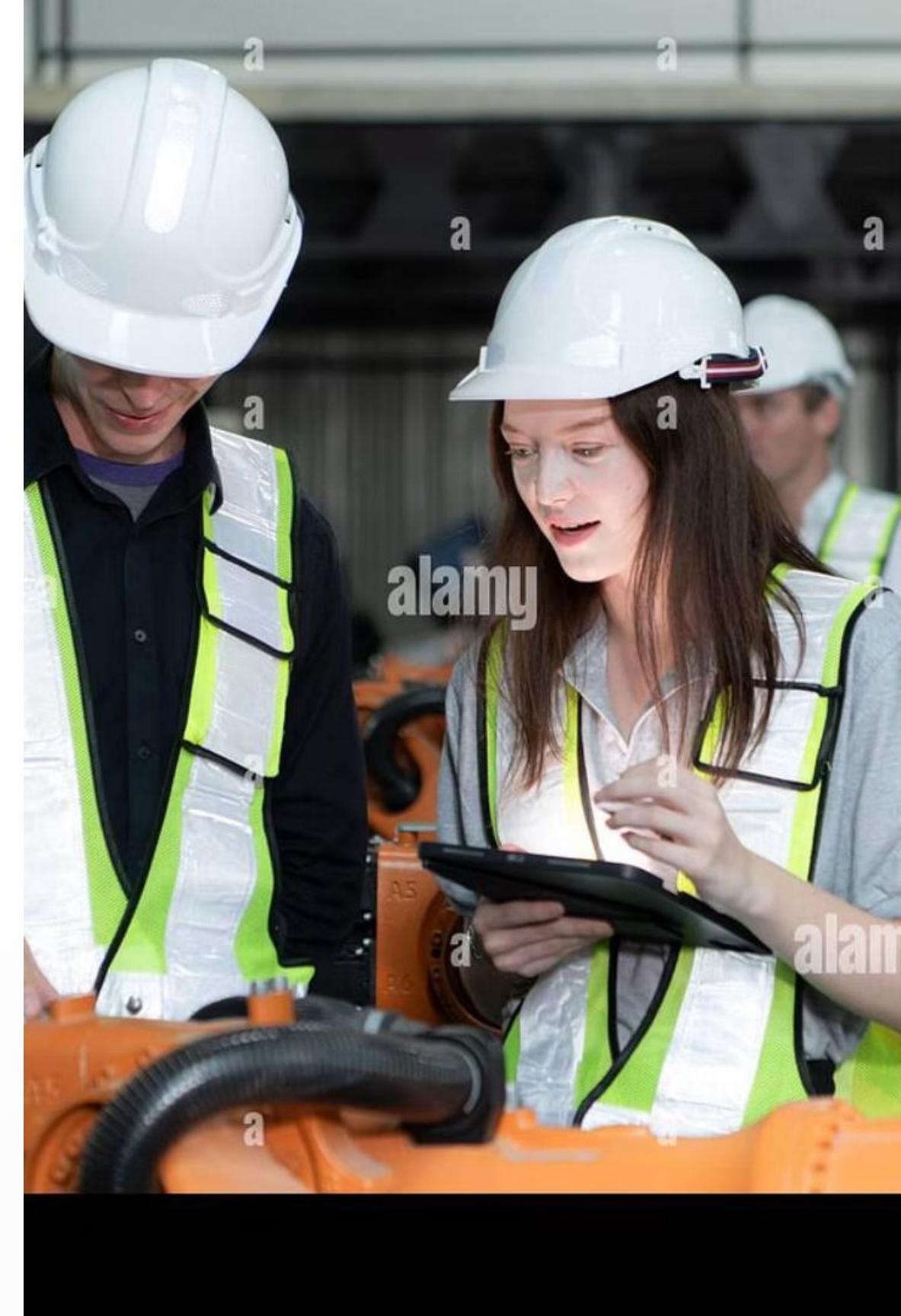
"We can't do that."

"You certainly have a problem."

## Good way to respond

"I would like to help you find a solution to the problem."

"Let's see what we can do together to work out a solution to this problem."



# Preventable Situations

## Situation

Someone promised the customer something that was not delivered.

Someone was rude or indifferent to the customer.

The customer feels that someone in your company presented an unpleasant attitude towards him or her.

The customer feels he or she was not listened to.

## Remedial Action

Follow through on what was promised.

In some instances, the courtesy is unintentional. The customer may sometimes interpret what is intended as humour as rudeness. Always treat the customer with respect.

A customer may sometimes be rude or surly, but you must not use this behaviour as an excuse to act in an unprofessional manner.

Customers want to be listened to and do not want to repeat themselves unnecessarily. Be attentive to the customer and use good listening techniques.

# More Preventable Situations

## Situation

Someone told the customer that he or she has no right to be angry.

The customer received a smart or flip reply in answer to a question.

Someone in your company has argued with the customer.

## Remedial Action

Emotions are not right or wrong. Telling customers they have no right to be angry will probably make them angrier. Be patient and sympathetic.

Responding to a customer with sarcasm will increase their anger or upset and increase tension. Reply to questions professionally and with respect for the customer.

Remember that avoiding an argument is the only way to get the best of it. When you argue with a customer, you always lose—even though you may win the argument.

# Dealing with Difficult Situations

As a gas technician/fitter making a service call, you have a specific objective: to provide technical service. You are not making a social call.

After a customer makes a service call, there is always some delay before a technician/fitter arrives. Pressures can build up as the customer waits. If the technician/fitter comes later than expected, the customer may become angry or upset. The customer does not care about traffic, the weather, or other uncontrollable reasons has caused the delay. The customer is only concerned about getting a solution for his/her problem as quickly as possible.





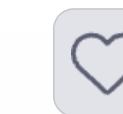
# Working in a Potentially Hostile Environment

Generally, the gas technician/fitter can expect the customer to be irritable and concerned, rather than warm and friendly. For this reason, the gas technician/fitter works in a potentially hostile environment.



**Understand stress psychology**

Understand the basic psychology of stress



**Be caring and diplomatic**

Show genuine concern while maintaining professional boundaries



**Practice perspective-taking**

Be able to put himself or herself in the customer's place in order to understand the customer's difficulties

# Using Personal Presence

## Professional Image

If you find yourself in a position where you are dealing with a difficult customer, the way you present yourself is one of your most effective tools.

You can use your professional image to project power, control, knowledge, and composure.

## Impact of Appearance

If, however, you are dressed inappropriately or too casually, or are unkempt and unprofessional in appearance, the customer is more likely to aggressively respond to you.

At some time, you may have experienced the effect of your appearance on someone when you were the customer. For example, you may have noticed how much easier it is to get service in some establishments when you are neatly dressed and well-groomed than it is when you are sloppily dressed and untidy in appearance.

## Positive Language in Customer Service: The Benefits & How to Use It

- X
- X
- X
- X
- X



# Using Non-verbal Communication



## Facial Expression

Your facial expression is critical when listening to a customer's complaint. If you roll your eyes, scowl, or smile inappropriately, you may incite anger. Maintain a calm, sincere, concerned, interested expression.



## Body Language

Show your attentiveness through your posture, movements, and gestures. Do not slouch—stand up straight. Do not cross your arms. Maintaining an open, non-threatening posture shows that you are listening with an open mind.



## Tone of Voice

Speak in a calm, confident, caring, soothing voice. This will assist you in calming the customer. People respond more to how you speak rather than to what you are saying.



# Using Verbal Communication

## Avoid Negative Expressions

Do not sigh or use similar expressions of annoyance or impatience in front of an angry customer.

## Maintain Professional Language

Never curse even if a customer does. As a professional, you must maintain your composure and avoid responding to verbal abuse. It is a sign of strength, not weakness, to remain calm and respond to verbal abuse with patience.

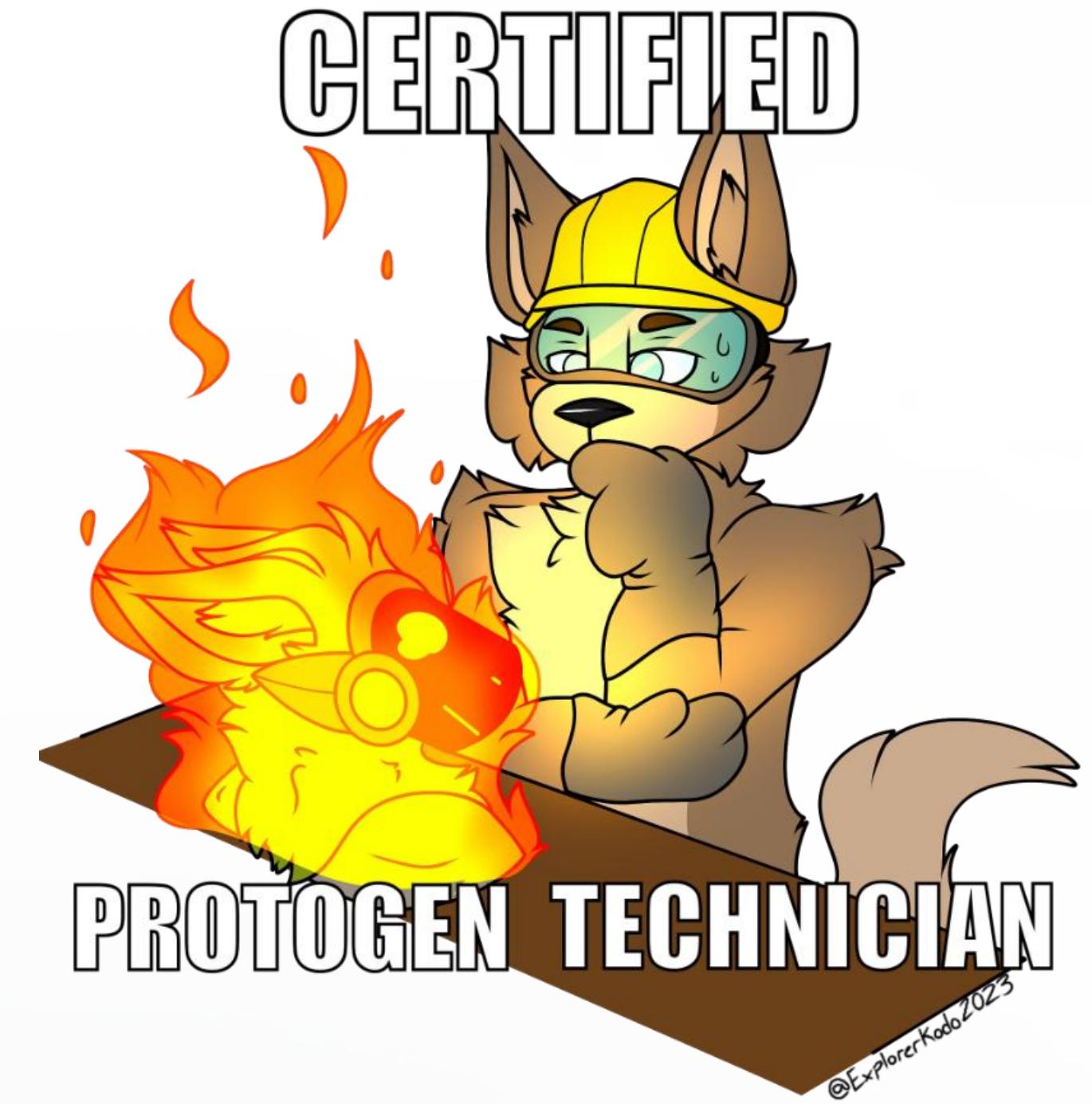
## Focus on Solutions

If a customer persists in demanding something unreasonable or impossible, tell them what you can do. Do not say what you cannot do. Continue to repeat your offer calmly and patiently until the customer understands.

# Getting a Customer's Attention

## Use Their Name

If a customer will not give you a chance to explain or ask questions, you might try using their name at the beginning of your sentence. This is often an effective way to get a person's attention, as most people listen when they hear their name.



# Dealing with Emotional Customers



## Lower your voice pitch

Speaking in a lower tone helps calm the situation



## Slow your speech

Talk more slowly than you normally would, without being offensive



## Maintain eye contact

Keep eye contact with the customer to show engagement



## Control facial expressions

Maintain an interested, concerned, non-threatening facial expression



## Focus on solutions

Tell customers what you can do for them—not what you cannot do



## Avoid arguments

Refuse to be drawn into an argument with the customer

# The Power of Silence

## Benefits of Remaining Silent

- By saying nothing, you will not be responding to a customer's negative comments
- It will give you time to think and help you maintain your composure



# Types of Difficult Customers

**The Talkative Customer**  
Talks excessively about unrelated topics

**The Drunk or Profane Customer**  
Under the influence or using inappropriate language

**The Hostile Customer**  
Openly aggressive or threatening

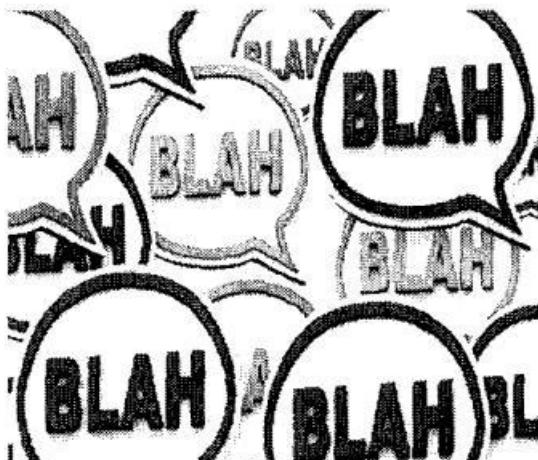
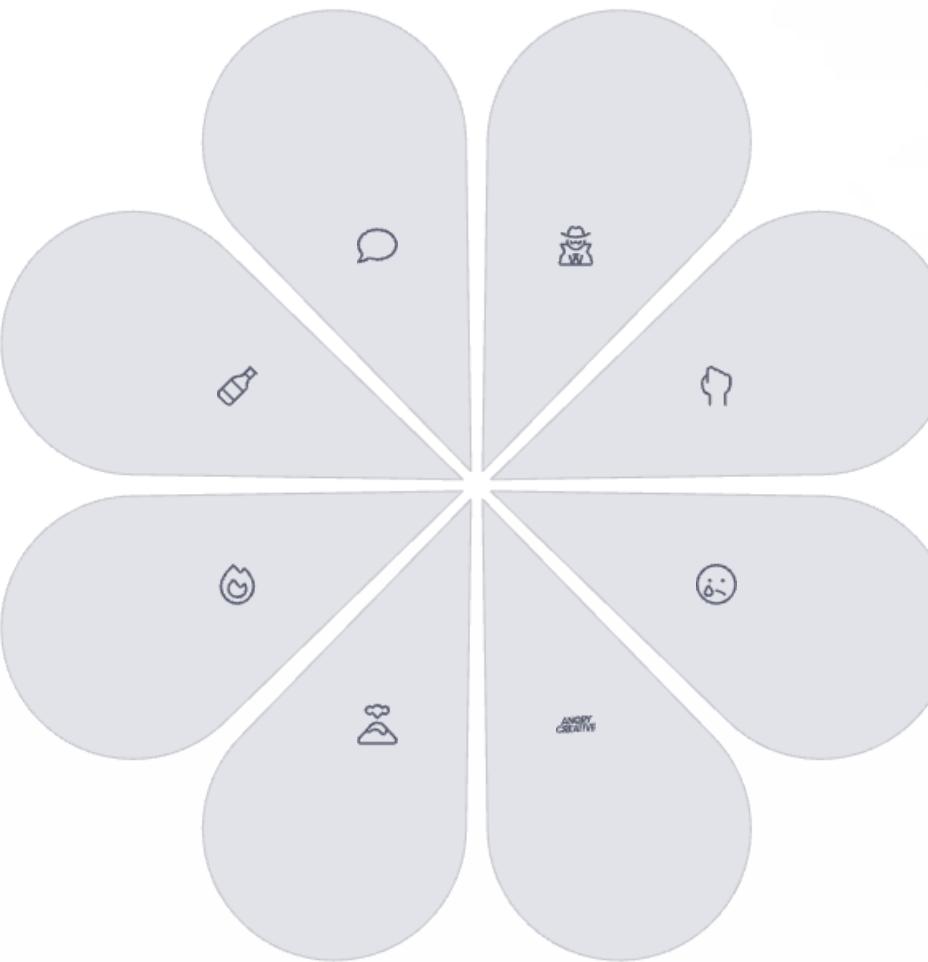
**The Customer Suppressing Anger**  
Keeps anger "bottled up"

**The Unresponsive Customer**  
Shy and passive with little to say

**The Obstinate Customer**  
Insists on being uncooperative

**The Whining Customer**  
Complains about everything

**The Rude Customer**  
Disrespectful and impolite



# The Talkative Customer

## Strategies

In a situation where the customer insists on talking about his or her problems to the extent that it interferes with your ability to get on with your work, there are a couple of strategies that you can use:

- Agree that you have a problem to solve, that you can begin to solve it right now, and could they please show you the way to the furnace, thermostat, etc.
- Turn the topic of conversation toward the specific trouble that the customer asked you to correct and make a statement or ask a question that calls for the customer's action.

## Example

"Mr. Jones, I understand that you have a problem with your furnace. You said that the house is not warming up to the temperature you set on the thermostat. I can solve that problem for you right now. Can you show me where the thermostat is located?"

This method ends the conversation with Mr. Jones by asking a practical question that gives him input to the problem and respects his dignity, while allowing you to get on with the job.

# The Unresponsive Customer

## Characteristics

Some people are naturally shy and passive. When a customer is unresponsive and has little to say, it can be challenging to get the information you need to solve their problem.

## Effective Questions

Ask questions that require answers with full sentences and that will give you the information you need. For example, you can begin with one of the following questions:

- "What is the problem you are experiencing?"
- "How did it happen?"
- "What can I do to help?"

# The Obstinate Customer

## Characteristics

If a customer insists on being obstinate and uncooperative, and you are having trouble coming to an agreement, it can be difficult to make progress on solving their problem.

## Solution-Focused Phrases

Make comments directed towards finding a solution to the problem. The following phrases are a good way to begin this process:

- "What would you like me to do now (customer's name)?"
- "What do you think would be a good way to solve this problem?"
- "What can I do to make you happy?"

In response, the customer may often be less demanding than you expect. However, if you cannot reach an agreement, you should call in your supervisor.

# The Whining Customer

## Characteristics

Occasionally, you may encounter a customer who is a "whiner". A whiner likes to tell others all about their feelings, hurts, and disappointments. They may complain about how late you were getting to the call or how someone else in your company was rude to them.

## Effective Approach

Your goal is to get them to focus on active communication. To do this, you can ask questions like:

- "How could we have served you better?"
- "How would you like things to be handled the next time?"

# The Rude Customer

## Characteristics

Rude customers may be disrespectful, impolite, or use inappropriate language. They may make personal comments or be dismissive of your expertise.

## Effective Approach

The main thing to do when dealing with a rude customer is to keep your cool. Smile in a friendly, inoffensive way and ask questions, such as:

- "What would you like me to do to solve the problem you are having?"
- "I am not meeting your expectations. What can I do?"

# The Customer Suppressing Anger

## Characteristics

It is difficult to communicate with people who keep their anger "bottled up". Their words may not indicate their mood, but the tone of their voice certainly will.



## Effective Approach

Before you can establish meaningful communication with them, you must allow them to express their anger. You can accomplish this in the following ways:

- Express to the customer what you see by stating: "You are obviously very concerned about what has happened." or "You have every right to be upset about it."
- Try to get the customer to talk about what is bothering them. Ask questions like: "How do you feel about it?" or "What was your reaction when it happened?"
- After the customer has had a chance to express their anger, you can move on to questions that will allow you to get on with solving their problem.

# The Hostile Customer



## Listen actively

Listen actively and attentively—let customers continue until their anger has subsided



## Use positive body language

Maintain an open, friendly posture



## Recap feelings

When circumstances allow, recap the feelings they have expressed and the reason for their anger



## Maintain eye contact

Maintain eye contact and a concerned facial expression



## Show empathy

When you can speak, use phrases that show you empathize with the customer such as those beginning with "Yes, I see"



## Identify the problem

Identify the problem that needs solution and try to maintain a focus on that

# Moving Forward with Hostile Customers

## Ask Solution-Focused Questions

When possible, move on to asking the customer questions that will allow you to get on with the job. For example:

"What can I do to help solve this problem?"

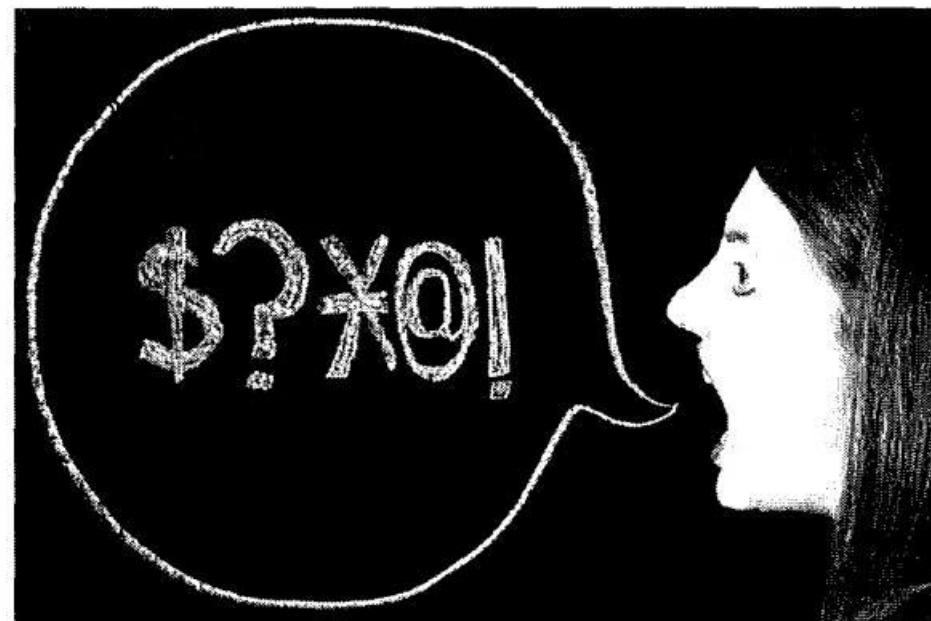


# The Drunk or Profane Customer

## Setting Boundaries

As a service technician, you should never allow a customer to verbally abuse you nor should you be exposed to potential violence. However, sometimes you may unexpectedly find yourself in an abusive environment.

You must never actually accuse a customer of being drunk or of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Such a statement can make you and your employer liable to legal action.



## Professional Responses

When a customer is abusive, you can say either of the following:

- "I am sorry, but if you cannot speak to me on a professional basis, I will have to call my supervisor."
- "I am sorry, but if you cannot speak to me on a professional basis, I will have to leave."

Immediately following the incident, make accurate notes for future reference. If a fellow worker is present and has witnessed the incident, have this co-worker read and sign your notes.

# High-Risk Situations

## Reputation Risk

Putting yourself in a situation where you could receive criticisms for your actions and that could adversely affect your own and the gas company's reputation.

## Minors Alone

Entering a home where young children or minors are alone on the premises at any time without adult supervision.

## No Adult Present

When a customer or another adult representative is not always on the premises.

## Substance Influence

When a customer is obviously under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

## Abusive Behavior

When a customer is abusive or unreasonable.

# Understanding Customer Anxiety

## Basic Survival Needs

The work of a gas technician/fitter affects a persons' basic survival. Answering a no-heat call on a cold evening puts you face-to-face with customers who are depending on your actions and assistance to provide for their family's safety and survival.

## Defusing Tension

Understanding their level of anxiety up front may help defuse tension. Recognizing that customers may be worried about their family's comfort and safety can help you approach the situation with greater empathy.

**WARNING**

**My head  
or my  
stomach  
hurts**



**WARNING**

**My chest  
feels tight**

## Dealing with Potential Violence

There may be occasions when an enraged customer confronts and threatens you or becomes violent. In a situation of this kind, rely on your gut feelings if it appears that the situation could get out of control.



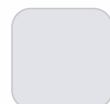
**Clenched fists and tense body**

Watch for physical signs of aggression



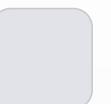
**Facial indicators**

Red face, tight lips, flared nostrils, and wide-open eyes



**Voice changes**

An agitated and aggressive tone of voice



**Substance influence**

Evidence of alcohol or drug use

# Responding to Threats

## Seek Assistance

If a customer does become unruly or threatens you with violence, seek assistance from someone—you do not have to put up with threats of any sort.

## Avoid Reasoning with Threatening Customers

Never attempt to reason with a customer who is threatening or who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If a customer appears potentially violent, do not be too embarrassed to call the police. It is better to risk embarrassment than to be a victim of violence.

# Personal Safety Tips

## Do

- Ask your dispatcher to check company records if you suspect that a customer has a previous history of being a problem or of aggressive or violent behaviour
- If you feel threatened, get away to a safe location—if necessary, you can return later with your supervisor or the police
- Immediately report all incidents of aggression or violence to your supervisor and to company security—report all details in writing

## Do Not

- Let the emergency or work situation distract you from paying attention to what is going on around you—perform an occasional check to ensure you are not being stalked or followed
- Make yourself a target for robbery—do not openly flash money or wear expensive jewelry

Be more cautious at night—criminal activity and personal crime increases sharply during the night hours.

# Reading Danger Signs

1

## Recognize warning signs

Be alert to physical and verbal cues of potential danger



## Take preventive measures

Position yourself near exits and maintain safe distance



## Have communication ready

Keep phone accessible for emergency calls



## Know when to leave

Don't hesitate to exit if situation becomes unsafe

# Importance of Documentation

## Record Keeping

Maintaining accurate records of all customer interactions, especially difficult ones, is essential for several reasons:

- Creates a paper trail for future reference
- Protects you and your company legally
- Helps identify patterns with problematic customers
- Provides information for other technicians who may visit the same customer

## What to Document

Be sure to record:

- Date, time, and location of incident
- Customer's name and contact information
- Detailed description of what happened
- Any witnesses present
- Actions you took to resolve the situation
- Any follow-up required

# Preventive Measures for Safety



## Research

Check customer history before visits

## Communication

Keep phone charged and accessible

## Schedule

Plan visits during daylight when possible

## Location sharing

Let colleagues know your whereabouts

# Handling Complaints About Colleagues

## Listen Without Judgment

When a customer complains about another technician or employee:

- Listen attentively without interrupting
- Don't agree with criticism of your colleagues or company
- Acknowledge their feelings without placing blame

## Professional Response

Respond with statements like:

- "I understand your concern, and I'll make sure this is addressed"
- "I appreciate you bringing this to our attention"
- "Let me focus on solving your current issue first"

Document the complaint accurately and report it through proper channels.

# Building Customer Trust



# Turning Difficult Situations into Opportunities

## Service Recovery Paradox

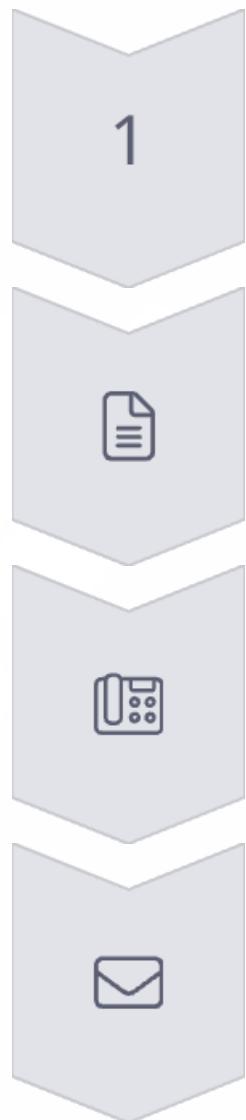
Customers will often judge the level of your service based on how well you recover from a difficult situation. They are very likely to forgive you if you end the interaction on a positive note.

A well-handled complaint can actually create stronger customer loyalty than if no problem had occurred at all.

## Keys to Successful Recovery

- Respond quickly to the issue
- Take ownership of the problem
- Offer a fair solution
- Follow up to ensure satisfaction
- Learn from the experience to prevent recurrence

# Effective Follow-Up Techniques



**Confirm completion**

Verify all work is done to satisfaction

**Document work**

Provide detailed explanation of services

**Call next day**

Check that everything is working properly

**Send thank you**

Express appreciation for their business



# Cultural Sensitivity in Customer Service

## Respect Cultural Differences

Be aware that communication styles, personal space preferences, and expectations may vary across cultures. What seems rude in one culture may be normal in another.

## Avoid Assumptions

Don't make assumptions about a customer based on their appearance, accent, or name. Treat each customer as an individual with unique needs.

## Adapt Communication Style

Be flexible in how you communicate. Some cultures prefer direct communication while others value more indirect approaches. Pay attention to cues and adjust accordingly.

## Be Patient with Language Barriers

If there's a language barrier, speak clearly (not loudly), use simple terms, and be patient. Consider using visual aids when possible.



# Managing Stress During Difficult Interactions

## Recognize Your Stress Signals

Be aware of your own stress responses:

- Increased heart rate
- Shallow breathing
- Muscle tension
- Irritability

## Quick Stress Management Techniques

- Take deep, controlled breaths
- Count to ten before responding
- Focus on facts, not emotions
- Use positive self-talk
- Take a brief mental break if possible
- Remember that it's not personal

# Developing Emotional Intelligence



# Handling Unreasonable Demands

## Set Clear Boundaries

When customers make unreasonable demands:

- Remain calm and professional
- Clearly explain what you can and cannot do
- Focus on what's possible rather than limitations
- Offer alternatives when available

## Sample Responses

Instead of saying "We can't do that," try:

- "Here's what I can do for you..."
- "While that specific option isn't available, I can offer..."
- "Company policy requires that I..."
- "Let me suggest an alternative that might work..."



# Communicating Technical Information

Assess customer's technical knowledge

Determine how much detail to provide based on their understanding

Use simple, clear language

Avoid jargon and technical terms unless the customer is familiar with them

Provide visual explanations

Use diagrams or demonstrations when possible

Confirm understanding

Ask questions to ensure the customer comprehends the information

# Handling Complaints About Pricing

## Common Price Objections

- "That's more than I expected to pay"
- "Your competitor charges less"
- "I was quoted a different price"
- "That seems excessive for the work done"

## Effective Responses

- Explain the value provided, not just the cost
- Break down the components of the price
- Highlight quality, warranty, and service benefits
- If there was a misquote, acknowledge it professionally
- Know when to involve a supervisor for pricing exceptions



# Handling Multiple Issues Simultaneously

1

## Prioritize

Address safety concerns first, then functionality issues

2

## Organize

Create a systematic approach to multiple problems

3

## Communicate

Keep customer informed about your process and timeline

4

## Document

Record all issues and solutions for future reference

# Dealing with Callbacks and Repeat Issues

## Customer Perspective

When a customer calls back about the same issue:

- They may feel their time has been wasted
- Their trust in your expertise may be diminished
- They're likely frustrated and more sensitive
- They expect priority treatment

## Professional Response

- Acknowledge their frustration immediately
- Don't be defensive about the previous service
- Prioritize their callback when scheduling
- Be thorough in your diagnosis and repair
- Explain what might have caused the recurrence
- Provide assurance about the new solution

# Handling Emergency Situations



**1** Assess the situation quickly

Determine if there are immediate safety concerns like gas leaks



**Address the emergency**

Use your training to handle the immediate problem

**2**

**Ensure safety first**

Take immediate actions to protect people and property



**Communicate clearly**

Give direct instructions to customers about necessary safety measures



**Document thoroughly**

Record all actions taken during the emergency response

# Continuous Improvement in Customer Service



**2) Care About the Customer**

**3) Leave Arrogance Behind**



## Maintaining Professional Boundaries

### Establish Clear Limits

Define what services you can provide and what falls outside your professional scope. Be clear about working hours and response times.

### Manage Personal Information

Be friendly but cautious about sharing personal details. Maintain professional distance while still being approachable.

### Handle Gift Offers Appropriately

Know your company policy on accepting gifts or tips. If allowed, accept graciously; if not, decline politely while expressing appreciation.

### Address Inappropriate Behavior

If a customer behaves inappropriately, address it professionally or remove yourself from the situation if necessary.

# Team Approach to Difficult Customers

## Share Experiences

Discuss challenging customer interactions with colleagues to gain different perspectives and solutions. Learn from each other's experiences.

Create a supportive environment where team members can vent frustrations constructively and receive encouragement.

## Develop Consistent Responses

Work together to establish standard approaches to common difficult situations. This ensures customers receive consistent service regardless of which technician they interact with.

Know when to involve supervisors or other team members for particularly challenging customers. Sometimes a fresh face can help defuse a tense situation.

# Key Takeaways



## Listen actively

The foundation of effective customer service is attentive listening



## Show empathy

Understanding the customer's perspective is crucial for defusing tension



## Focus on solutions

Always emphasize what you can do rather than what you cannot



## Prioritize safety

Never compromise your personal safety in difficult situations



## Continuous improvement

Learn from each challenging interaction to enhance your skills



# CSA Unit 7

## Chapter 4

### Understanding Cultural Differences

In our multicultural society, there are many occasions when a gas technician/fitter will encounter someone of a different culture. This guide describes the cultural differences that gas technicians/fitters may have to deal with and the strategies to overcome cultural differences affecting work issues.



# Purpose and Objectives

## Purpose

In our multicultural society, there are many occasions when a gas technician/fitter will encounter someone of a different culture. This Chapter describes the cultural differences that the gas technician/fitter may have to deal with and the strategies to overcome cultural differences affecting work issues.

## Objectives

At the end of this Chapter, you will be able to:

- describe cultural differences; and
- describe strategies for overcoming cultural differences affecting work issues.

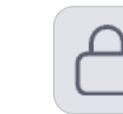


# Handling Unruly Customers



## Seek assistance

If violence is threatened,  
call the police



## Shut off the fuel supply

Mark the work order that  
the system has been  
tagged



## Lock the meter

Shut off the fuel supply and lock it

# Effective Customer Communication



## Utilizing listening techniques

Assures the customer of your attentiveness to their problem

## Responding confidently

Responding to a customer's remarks in a confident, serious, and professional manner indicates you understand the seriousness of their concerns

## Body language awareness

Ensuring you do not display language or speak to the customer in a detrimental manner shows your respect for him/her

## Listening for feelings

Listening for feelings as well as facts assists the gas technician/fitter in assessing the urgency the customer has in having the problem resolved

**Title: Gas Technician (Field based)**

**Date of Advertisement: 13 September 2018**

**Deadline for applicants: 26 September 2018**

Gulf Keystone Petroleum is an independent oil and gas company and leading upstream operator in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Following a series of major discoveries the Company is growing quickly. We are looking for a number of high calibre individual to hold the position of Gas Technician.

### **Major Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Promotes an outstanding HSE culture
- Providing gas protection and HSE-related support to line management in the implementation of the HSE Plan, Policy, procedures and practices
- Ensures that gas protection equipment is functioning 24/7
- Monitors site compliance with statutory HSE responsibilities and the site HSE Plan, Policy, procedure and industry best practices
- Identifies, manages and implements HSE improvements as well gas protection equipment, standards and procedures
- Provides continuous monitoring in areas with possible hazardous atmospheres
- In charge of the rigging up, maintaining and removal of mobile Gas Detection Systems
- Ensures operability of Air Compressors, gas detectors and all equipment referring to gas protection. Ensures that proper maintenance including air purification cartridge changes, oil changes and other filter changes have been performed and documented. Performs scheduled air quality checks.
- Can complete inspection, maintenance, repairs, cleaning, servicing, reassembling and testing of SCBA's, manifolds, regulators, hoses and other safety equipment according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Ensures that all Cascade Air Banks are charged and online. Ensures that all Self Contained Breathing Apparatus are functional and fully charged.
- Can disassemble and reassemble SCBA's & SABA's and can trouble shoot air tanks.
- Assist operations and maintenance departments in setting up systems for operational activities on production facilities and wellsite's
- Complete daily gas testing
- Provide H2S training for new team members, contractors and visitors to site
- provide daily reports and keep/update H2S training records and follow re-badging dates
- Completes daily, weekly and monthly checks on equipment
- Keeps records of gas equipment stock, container shelves with clean, tested and ready to use equipment and pull, stage, and load equipment for operational tasks
- Maintains work area and other areas in a clean and orderly condition.
- Maintains ongoing effort to keep operational equipment clean and respiration masks sanitized
- Maintains a running inventory of location and availability of safety equipment.



# Demonstrating Value to Customers



## Taking notes

By taking notes when the customer is explaining what they've noticed, you are indicating to the customer you value his/her input



## Proper word choice

Using the proper choice of words that show empathy for the customer's concerns and offer the promise of a resolution to the customer's problem is likely to develop a spirit of cooperation between the gas technician/fitter and the customer



## Building cooperation

Demonstrating respect and understanding helps establish a productive working relationship

# Types of Customers: The Talkative Customer

## Identifying Characteristics

Customer begins to tell you about how their day is going and veers off-topic from the actual service issue

- Tends to share personal stories
- May have difficulty focusing on the technical issue
- Often friendly but time-consuming

## Effective Strategies

Turn the topic of conversation towards the specific trouble or complaint

- Politely redirect the conversation
- Ask specific questions about the technical issue
- Acknowledge their comments briefly before refocusing

# Types of Customers: The Unresponsive Customer

## Identifying Characteristics

Customer tends to answer questions with a yes or no

- Provides minimal information
- May seem disinterested or reserved
- Difficult to assess their satisfaction level

## Effective Strategies

Pose questions that require full sentence answers

- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage elaboration on symptoms or issues
- Use prompts like "Tell me more about..."

# Types of Customers: The Angry Customer

## Identifying Characteristics

Customer is shouting and displaying visible signs of anger

- May use aggressive language or tone
- Could be frustrated by previous service experiences
- Needs to vent before being receptive to solutions

## Effective Strategies

Listen attentively, let the customer continue until their anger is defused

- Maintain calm, professional demeanor
- Avoid interrupting during initial venting
- Acknowledge their frustration
- Once calmer, focus on solutions

# Types of Customers: The Obstinate Customer

## Identifying Characteristics

Customer insists on being uncooperative

- May refuse access to equipment
- Could reject professional recommendations
- Might be fixed on their own solution

## Effective Strategies

Make comments directed towards finding a solution to the problem

- Focus on mutual goals
- Explain reasoning behind recommendations
- Offer options when possible
- Document any refusal of necessary service

# Types of Customers: Customer Suppressing Anger

## Identifying Characteristics

Customer tone of voice indicates anger, but the words do not

- May show passive-aggressive behavior
- Body language contradicts verbal communication
- Underlying issues may not be stated directly

## Effective Strategies

Try to get the customer to talk about what is the concern

- Ask about their expectations
- Acknowledge any service issues
- Create a safe space for honest feedback
- Address the underlying concerns

CULTURAL  
DICTIONARY  
FOR  
FILIPINOS

SECOND EDITION

THELMA B. KINTANAR  
AND ASSOCIATES

FOREWORD AND OVERVIEW BY  
JOSE V. ABUEVA

# Key Terminology

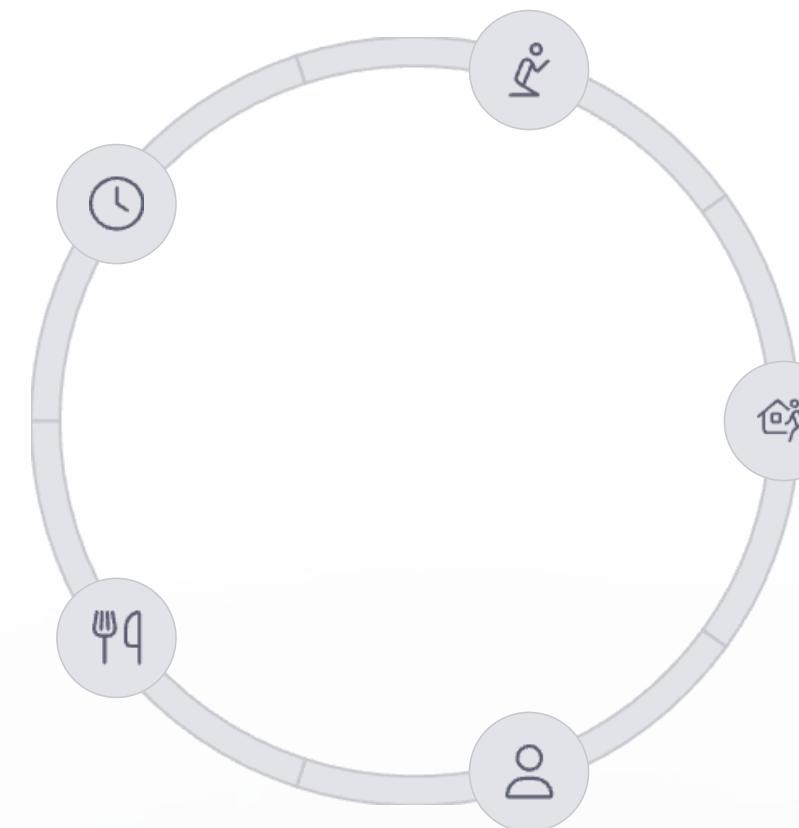
Term	Abbreviation (symbol)	Definition
Cross-culture		Interactivity between members of differing cultural groups
Limited English proficiency		Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English

# Cultural Differences Overview

Everyone, regardless of race, creed, or colour, deserves the same quality of service and treatment. In our multicultural society, there are many occasions when a service person will encounter someone of a different culture.

**Space and Time**  
Different cultures have varying concepts of personal space and punctuality

**Traditions**  
Traditional dress, food, and beverages may have cultural significance

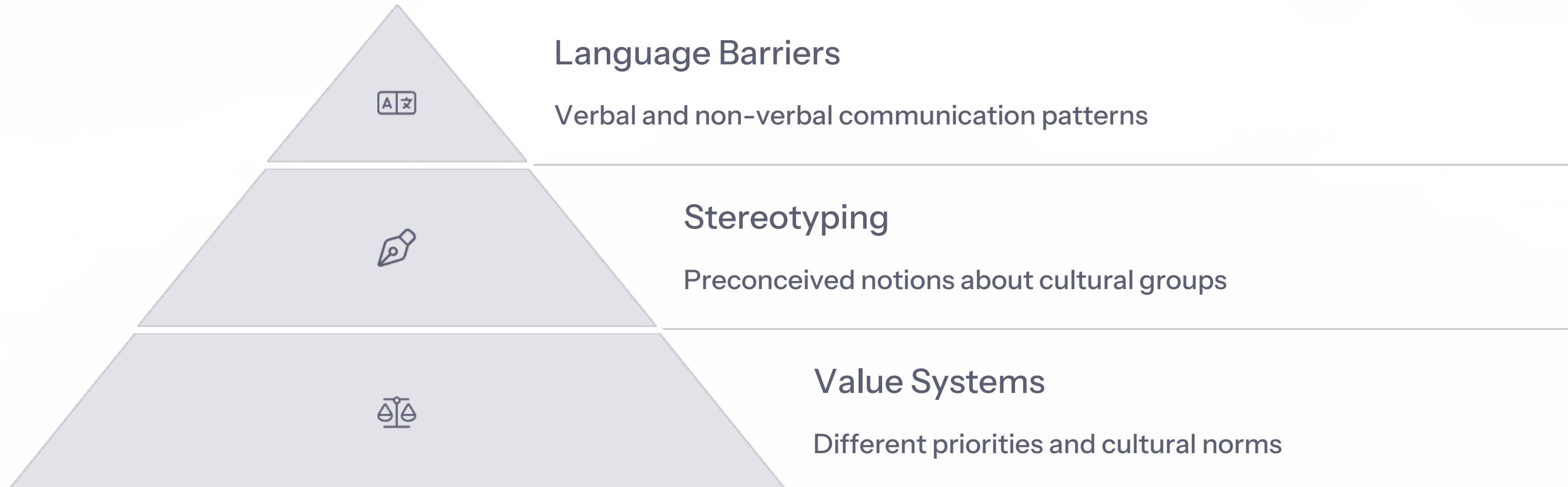


**Religious Practices**  
Understanding religious history and practices that may affect service timing

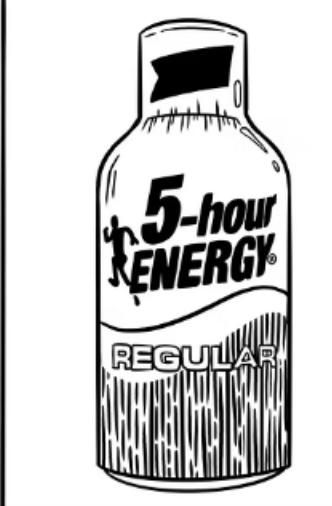
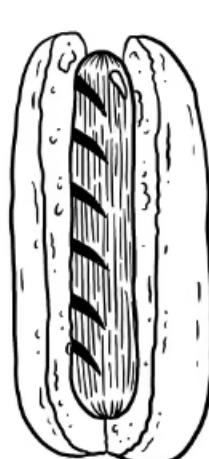
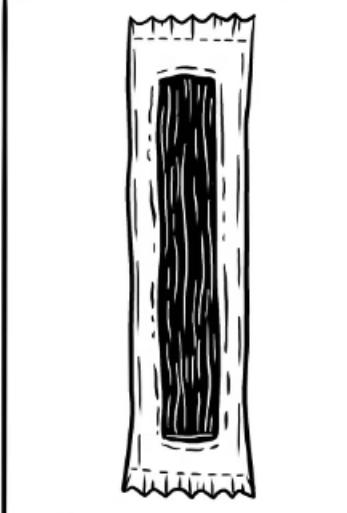
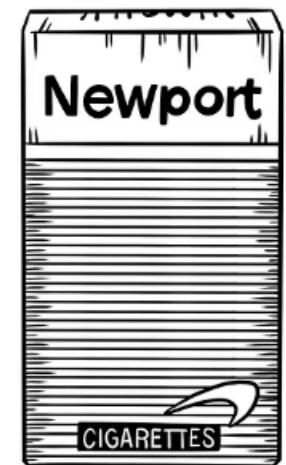
**Values**  
Work, property, family, and home values vary across cultures

**Personal Expectations**  
Gender and personal values and expectations differ culturally

# Barriers to Cross-Cultural Communication



# Overcoming Cross-Cultural Barriers



## Identify Misconceptions

Recognize incorrect perceptions and assumptions about other cultures in order to overcome them

## Establish Communication

Actively work to build bridges with people of other cultures

## Practice Tolerance

Demonstrate understanding and respect for cultural differences

## Educate Yourself

Read up on different cultures that you may engage with so that you have a better understanding of the people you deal with and the cultural differences you can expect to encounter



# Dealing with Limited English Proficiency



## Learn Basic Phrases

Learn a few phrases of the language that the customer speaks



## Identify Interpreters

Identify those among your staff who speak other languages and could help you by acting as interpreters. You can put their names on an easily accessed list for quick referral



## Adjust Speech Patterns

Practice slowing down your speech and not speaking louder



## Use Names

Learn to get the customer's name and use it. "Mr. or Mrs. (name), I appreciate that you speak more than one language but, unfortunately, I only speak English. I want to help you..."

# Written Communication Across Language Barriers

## Benefits of Written Communication

If you are communicating face-to-face, get the customer to write out his or her name and request. There are no accents to contend with when dealing with the written word.

- Eliminates pronunciation difficulties
- Creates a clear record of the request
- Allows time for proper translation if needed
- Reduces misunderstandings

## Helpful Tools

Several resources can assist with written communication:

- Translation apps on smartphones
- Picture cards showing common service issues
- Multilingual service request forms
- Digital translation devices

# Cultural Differences Affecting Work Issues

## Timelines and Scheduling

Different cultures may have varying expectations about appointment times and scheduling flexibility

## Priority Systems

What constitutes an urgent issue may differ across cultural backgrounds

## Contractual Details

Approaches to agreements and consent can vary significantly between cultures

## Payment Procedures

Payment terms and procedures may have cultural implications

## Service Expectations

Different cultures may have varying expectations regarding service delivery

## Property Access

Cultural norms regarding access to homes and private spaces can differ

# Accommodating Religious Practices

## Schedule Adjustments

Adjust work schedules to respect religious or cultural practices

- Be aware of prayer times
- Respect religious holidays
- Understand sabbath observances
- Accommodate fasting periods

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>Purim</b>	March 16 - 17	March 6 - 7	March 23 - 24	March 13 - 14	March 3 - 4
<b>Passover</b>	April 15 - 22	April 5 - 13	April 22 - 30	April 12 - 20	April 1 - 9
<b>Shavuot</b>	June 4 - 7	May 25 - 27	June 11 - 13	June 1 - 3	June 21 - 23
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	Sept. 25 - 27	Sept. 15 - 17	Oct. 2 - 4	Sept. 22 - 24	Sept. 11 - 13
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	Oct. 4 - 5	Sept. 24 - 25	Oct. 11 - 12	Oct. 1 - 2	Sept. 20 - 21
<b>Sukkot (First Days)</b>	Oct. 9 - 11	Sept. 29 - Oct. 1	Oct. 16 - 18	Oct. 6 - 8	Sept. 25 - 27
<b>Simchat Torah</b>	Oct. 16 - 18	Oct. 6 - 8	Oct. 23 - 25	Oct. 13 - 15	Oct. 2 - 4
<b>Chanukah</b>	Dec. 18 - 26	Dec. 7 - 15	Dec. 25 - Jan. 2	Dec. 14 - 22	Dec. 4 - 12

Understanding and respecting religious practices demonstrates cultural sensitivity and builds trust with customers from diverse backgrounds.



# Clarifying Work Expectations



## Extra Clarification

Make an extra effort to clarify the work you will do and what the customer can expect



## Explain Policies

Explain company policies and procedures and confirm an agreement before beginning work



## Use Interpreters

Use an interpreter or consider other cultural differences to resolve a misunderstanding with a customer if problems arise



## Respect Home Rules

Acknowledge and observe rules of appropriate behaviour with respect to customer's home or place of business

# Maintaining Patience and Courtesy

## The Value of Patience

When dealing with people from vastly different cultural backgrounds and business practices, it's best to remain patient and polite at all times. It never hurts to pepper your communication with "please" and "thank you".

Common courtesy can go a long way in smoothing out customer relations.

## Simple Language

Always keep your language simple, with no technical jargon or fancy sentence structures. Just say what you mean as clearly and as simply as possible.

## Seeking Clarification

In times when it's not clear to you what the other party means, it's best to seek clarification. Paraphrasing can be quite handy in confirming your understanding of what the other person is saying.

# Cultural Sensitivity in Home Visits



## Footwear Customs

Be prepared to remove shoes when entering homes of certain cultures



## Greeting Protocols

Learn appropriate greeting customs for different cultural groups



## Gender Considerations

Be aware of gender-specific interactions in some cultures



## Privacy Concerns

Respect cultural attitudes toward photography and documentation



## Food and Drink Offers

Understand cultural expectations around accepting refreshments

# Building Trust Across Cultures

**Listen Actively**  
Give full attention to understand cultural nuances

**Follow Through**  
Deliver on promises to build credibility



**Show Respect**  
Demonstrate regard for cultural differences

**Adapt Approach**  
Modify service style to accommodate cultural preferences

# Non-Verbal Communication Awareness

## Eye Contact

In some cultures, direct eye contact is considered respectful and attentive, while in others it may be seen as challenging or disrespectful.

- Western cultures often value direct eye contact
- Some Asian and Indigenous cultures may consider prolonged eye contact disrespectful
- Middle Eastern cultures may have gender-specific eye contact customs

## Personal Space

The comfortable distance between people during conversation varies significantly across cultures.

- North Americans typically prefer more personal space (3-4 feet)
- Mediterranean and Latin cultures often stand closer
- Be attentive to cues indicating comfort levels

## Gestures

Hand gestures can have dramatically different meanings across cultures.

- The "thumbs up" is offensive in some Middle Eastern countries
- Pointing with fingers is considered rude in many Asian cultures
- Head nodding doesn't always indicate agreement

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Time

## Monochronic Cultures

Some cultures view time as linear and appointments as fixed.

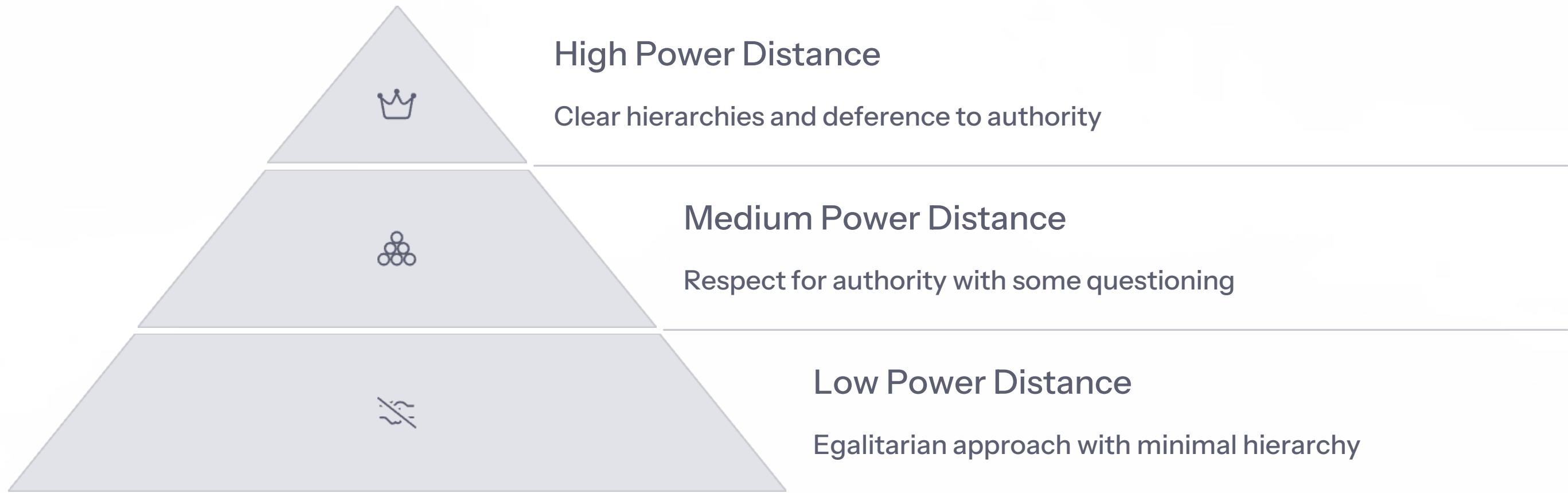
- North American and Northern European cultures
- Punctuality is highly valued
- Schedules are adhered to strictly
- One task is completed before moving to the next

## Polychronic Cultures

Other cultures view time as flexible and relationships as priority.

- Mediterranean, Latin American, and Middle Eastern cultures
- Appointments may be seen as approximate
- Multiple tasks may be handled simultaneously
- Personal relationships take precedence over schedules

# Cultural Perspectives on Authority



Understanding a culture's approach to authority can help gas technicians navigate who makes decisions in a household or business. In high power distance cultures (many Asian, African, and Latin American societies), the most senior person may need to approve work. In low power distance cultures (Scandinavian countries, New Zealand), decision-making may be more collaborative.

# Cultural Approaches to Conflict Resolution

## Direct Approach

Some cultures prefer addressing issues openly and directly.

- Common in North American and Northern European cultures
- Problems are stated explicitly
- Confrontation may be seen as necessary and healthy
- Focus on efficiency and resolution

## Indirect Approach

Other cultures prefer preserving harmony and saving face.

- Common in many Asian, Middle Eastern, and some Latin cultures
- Issues may be addressed through intermediaries
- Metaphors and stories might be used instead of direct statements
- Relationship preservation prioritized over immediate resolution

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Home Access



## Entry Protocols

Different cultures have varying expectations about home entry



## Private Spaces

Some areas of the home may be off-limits based on cultural practices



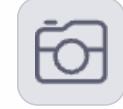
## Gender Considerations

In some cultures, male technicians may not be permitted to enter when only women are present



## Footwear Customs

Many cultures require removing shoes before entering homes



## Documentation Sensitivities

Taking photos or videos inside homes may be viewed differently across cultures

# Cultural Perspectives on Contracts and Agreements

## Written Agreement Cultures

Some cultures place high importance on detailed written contracts.

- Common in North American and Western European cultures
- Detailed documentation expected
- Signatures and formal approvals valued
- Legal language may be expected

## Relationship-Based Agreement Cultures

Other cultures prioritize relationship trust over formal documentation.

- Common in many Middle Eastern, Asian, and some Latin cultures
- Verbal agreements may carry significant weight
- Trust and reputation more important than paperwork
- Detailed contracts might be viewed with suspicion



# Types of Customer Payment Options

## Cultural Attitudes Toward Payment

### Timing Expectations

When payment is expected can vary significantly across cultures

### Negotiation Norms

Some cultures expect price negotiation as standard practice

### Payment Methods

Preferences for cash, credit, or other payment forms vary culturally

### Invoicing Detail

Expectations about itemization and documentation differ

# Cultural Perspectives on Technical Explanations

## Detail-Oriented Cultures

Some cultures expect thorough technical explanations.

- Common in German, Scandinavian, and some Asian cultures
- Detailed specifications may be requested
- Technical documentation valued
- Questions about process are expected

## Results-Oriented Cultures

Other cultures focus primarily on outcomes rather than process.

- Common in many Mediterranean and some Latin cultures
- Less interest in technical details
- Focus on when service will be completed
- Trust in expertise without needing explanation

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Safety



## Safety Prioritization

Varies across cultures



## Risk Perception

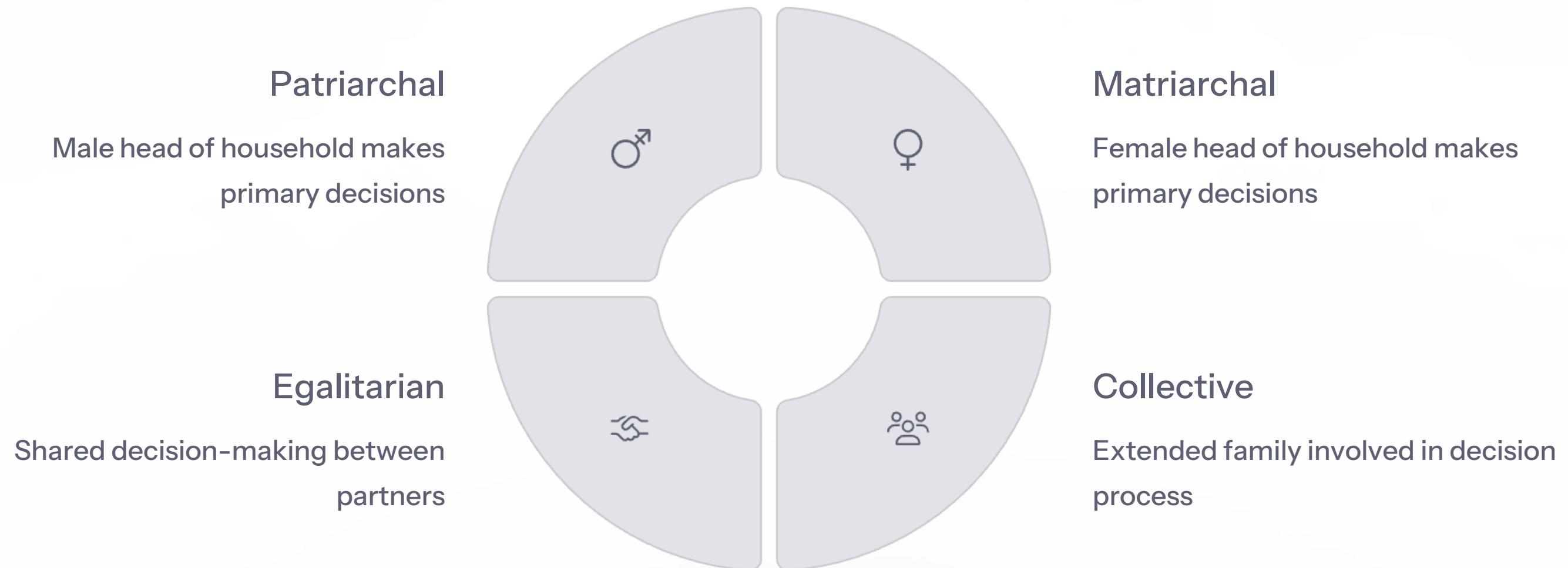
Cultural differences in evaluating danger

## Regulation Acceptance

Attitudes toward safety rules differ

Gas technicians must be aware that attitudes toward safety regulations and practices can vary significantly across cultures. Some cultures may have a more fatalistic view of accidents, while others expect extensive safety precautions. Regardless of cultural background, technicians must maintain safety standards while respectfully explaining their importance when necessary.

# Cultural Differences in Family Decision-Making



# Cultural Perspectives on Timeliness

## Punctuality-Focused Cultures

Some cultures place high value on exact timing.

- Common in German, Swiss, and Japanese cultures
- Arriving early is expected
- Precise appointment times are adhered to
- Delays are considered disrespectful

## Flexibility-Focused Cultures

Other cultures view time as more approximate.

- Common in Mediterranean, Latin American, and some Middle Eastern cultures
- Appointment times seen as estimates
- Relationships take precedence over schedules
- Flexibility is expected and valued

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Hospitality



## Refreshment Offers

Many cultures consider offering food or drink mandatory for visitors



## Gift Expectations

Some cultures may present small gifts to service providers



## Social Conversation

Expected length of social interaction before business varies culturally



## Greeting Protocols

Formal vs. informal greetings differ across cultures



# Cultural Perspectives on Technical Expertise

## Credential-Focused Cultures

Some cultures place high value on formal qualifications.

- Common in German, East Asian, and some North American contexts
- Certificates and licenses are important trust signals
- Technical vocabulary expected
- Formal education highly respected

## Experience-Focused Cultures

Other cultures prioritize practical experience and results.

- Common in many Mediterranean, Latin American, and some African cultures
- Personal recommendations carry more weight than credentials
- Demonstration of skill more important than formal education
- Relationship building establishes expertise credibility

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Gender Roles

## Traditional Gender Role Cultures

Some cultures maintain distinct gender expectations that may affect service interactions.

- Male technicians may not be permitted to enter homes with only women present
- Women may defer to male family members for decisions
- Physical contact (like handshakes) may be restricted between genders
- Technical discussions may be directed toward specific gender

## Egalitarian Gender Role Cultures

Other cultures have more fluid gender expectations in service contexts.

- Gender of technician generally not a concern
- Decision-making not determined by gender
- Professional interactions follow similar protocols regardless of gender
- Technical competence valued regardless of gender



# Cultural Perspectives on Documentation

## High-Context Cultures

Rely more on implicit understanding and relationships than detailed documentation

## Low-Context Cultures

Prefer explicit, detailed written documentation of all agreements and work

## Oral Tradition Cultures

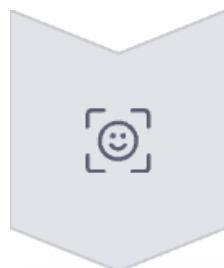
May place higher value on verbal agreements than written documents

## Legal-Focused Cultures

Expect comprehensive documentation with legal terminology

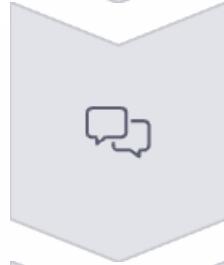


# Cultural Attitudes Toward Problem Resolution



## Problem Identification

Cultural differences in how directly problems are stated



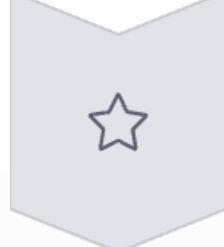
## Discussion Approach

Varying cultural preferences for direct vs. indirect communication



## Solution Development

Cultural differences in who should propose solutions



## Implementation

Varying cultural expectations about verification and follow-up

# Cultural Perspectives on Privacy

## High-Privacy Cultures

Some cultures maintain strict boundaries between public and private spaces.

- Common in Northern European, North American, and some East Asian cultures
- Clear designation of which areas visitors may access
- Personal questions may be considered intrusive
- Documentation and photos may require explicit permission

## Community-Oriented Cultures

Other cultures have more fluid boundaries between public and private.

- Common in many Mediterranean, Latin American, and some African cultures
- More open access to home spaces
- Personal questions may be considered friendly interest
- Community involvement in home matters more accepted

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Technology



## Digital Comfort

Varying cultural comfort levels with digital documentation and payments



## Traditional Preferences

Some cultures prefer traditional methods over technological solutions



## Innovation Attitudes

Cultural differences in acceptance of new technological approaches



## Technology Trust

Varying cultural levels of trust in technological solutions



# Cultural Perspectives on Feedback

## Direct Feedback Cultures

Some cultures provide straightforward, explicit feedback.

- Common in North American, German, and Dutch cultures
- Problems stated clearly and directly
- Criticism may be given without softening language
- Negative feedback considered helpful and constructive

## Indirect Feedback Cultures

Other cultures provide more subtle, nuanced feedback.

- Common in many East Asian, Middle Eastern, and some Latin cultures
- Problems hinted at rather than explicitly stated
- Criticism heavily cushioned with positive comments
- Saving face prioritized over direct correction

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Emergencies



## Emergency Definition

What constitutes an emergency varies culturally



## Response Expectations

Expected timeframes differ across cultures



## Communication Style

How emergencies are communicated varies

Gas technicians should be aware that what constitutes an emergency and how it should be handled can vary significantly across cultures. Some cultures may consider any gas issue an immediate emergency requiring instant attention, while others might be more measured in their response. Understanding these differences helps technicians prioritize service calls appropriately while maintaining safety standards.

# Cultural Perspectives on Home Modifications

## Tradition-Focused Cultures

Some cultures place high value on maintaining traditional home elements.

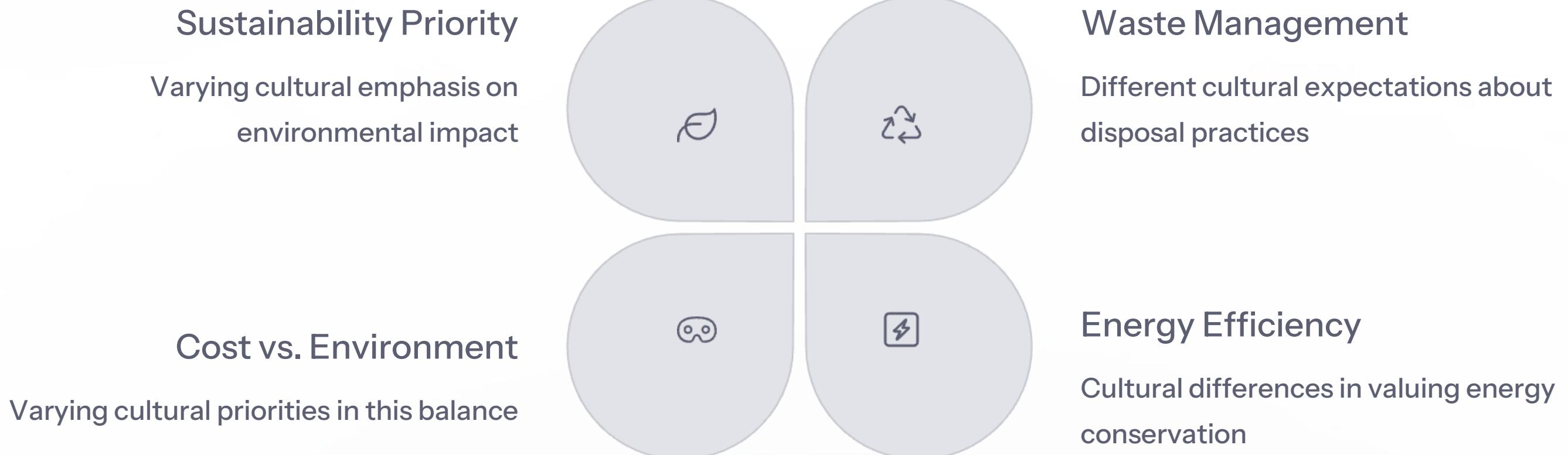
- May be reluctant to modify historical features
- Aesthetic considerations highly important
- Religious or cultural significance of certain spaces
- Family consultation may be required for changes

## Functionality-Focused Cultures

Other cultures prioritize practical considerations in home modifications.

- Efficiency and safety take precedence
- More open to modern upgrades
- Practical considerations outweigh aesthetic concerns
- Individual homeowner decisions without extended consultation

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Environmental Concerns



# Cultural Perspectives on Maintenance

## Preventative Maintenance Cultures

Some cultures emphasize regular maintenance to prevent problems.

- Common in German, Japanese, and some North American contexts
- Regular service schedules expected
- Willing to invest in prevention
- Long-term planning valued

## Reactive Maintenance Cultures

Other cultures focus on addressing issues as they arise.

- Common in various global contexts across different economic situations
- Service called only when problems occur
- Immediate cost considerations prioritized
- More acceptance of temporary solutions

**Kingsborough Community College  
in Partnership with National Grid offers:  
NATURAL GAS TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**



PROGRAM CODE: CTF 120  
COST: \$1250

Natural Gas Technician  
Certificate Program

Tuesdays & Thursdays 6-9 pm

\*Feb 6-May 3 AND

Saturdays 8 am-2:30 pm

\*Mar 3, Apr 14 & May 5

\*No classes Apr 3 & 5

This 12-week program serves as an introduction to the gas industry and will expose you to the job tasks, work methods and safety practices utilized by various workforce positions in gas construction, maintenance, and customer service.

Successful completion of this Certificate guarantees an employment interview.

**TO APPLY, CALL 718 368-5050**

Applications accepted now through Monday, Jan 8, 2018.

This program is not available under Kingsborough's Veterans Program offerings.

FREE  
OPEN HOUSE  
AT  
KINGSBOROUGH  
THUR. DEC 14  
6-8PM

Light refreshments will be served

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

Must be at least 18 years old  
High School diploma or GED/TASC  
Valid driver's license

**APPLICATION & REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION:**

Completed Gas Technician Certificate Application Form,  
including any related work experience (i.e. construction,  
plumbing, HVAC, etc.)  
Copy of High School diploma or GED/TASC  
Copy of valid driver's license  
Medical history and physical report  
Signed Agreement and Release of Claims form

**PROGRAM PRE-ENTRY TESTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Aptitude Test (written exam)  
Pre-Entry Physical Assessment  
Note: Only applicants that pass the Aptitude Test will be scheduled for the Pre-Entry Physical Assessment

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Professional Credentials

## Formal Qualification Focus

Some cultures place high emphasis on official certifications and degrees

## Experience-Based Trust

Other cultures prioritize demonstrated experience over formal credentials

## Relationship-Based Trust

Some cultures rely primarily on personal recommendations and relationships

## Authority-Based Trust

Certain cultures defer to recognized authorities or institutions



# Cultural Perspectives on Home Access During Service



## Presence Expectations

Some cultures expect homeowner to remain present during entire service



## Family Member Requirements

Certain cultures require specific family members to be present



## Community Involvement

Some cultures involve neighbors or community members in service visits



## Independent Work Preference

Other cultures prefer technicians to work independently without supervision

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Technical Explanations

## Detail-Oriented Cultures

Some cultures expect comprehensive technical explanations.

- Want to understand exactly what happened and why
- Expect detailed breakdown of repair process
- May ask many technical questions
- Appreciate documentation and diagrams

## Outcome-Focused Cultures

Other cultures are primarily concerned with results rather than process.

- Less interested in technical details
- Focus on whether problem is fixed
- Trust expert to handle technical aspects
- Prefer simple, non-technical explanations

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Scheduling

**Appointment Setting**  
Cultural differences in how far ahead to schedule



**Time Precision**  
Varying cultural expectations about punctuality

**Schedule Changes**  
Different cultural attitudes toward rescheduling

# Cultural Perspectives on Home Safety

## Regulation-Focused Cultures

Some cultures place high value on adherence to safety codes and regulations.

- Common in Northern European, North American, and Australian contexts
- Expect compliance with all safety standards
- Willing to invest in safety upgrades
- Appreciate detailed safety explanations

## Traditional Practice Cultures

Other cultures may prioritize traditional methods over modern safety standards.

- May be found in various global contexts
- More resistant to changing established practices
- May question necessity of certain safety measures
- Cost considerations may outweigh safety upgrades

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Home Modifications



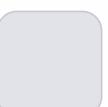
## Traditional Preservation

Some cultures highly value maintaining traditional home features



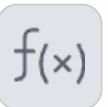
## Modernization Openness

Other cultures readily embrace modern upgrades and modifications



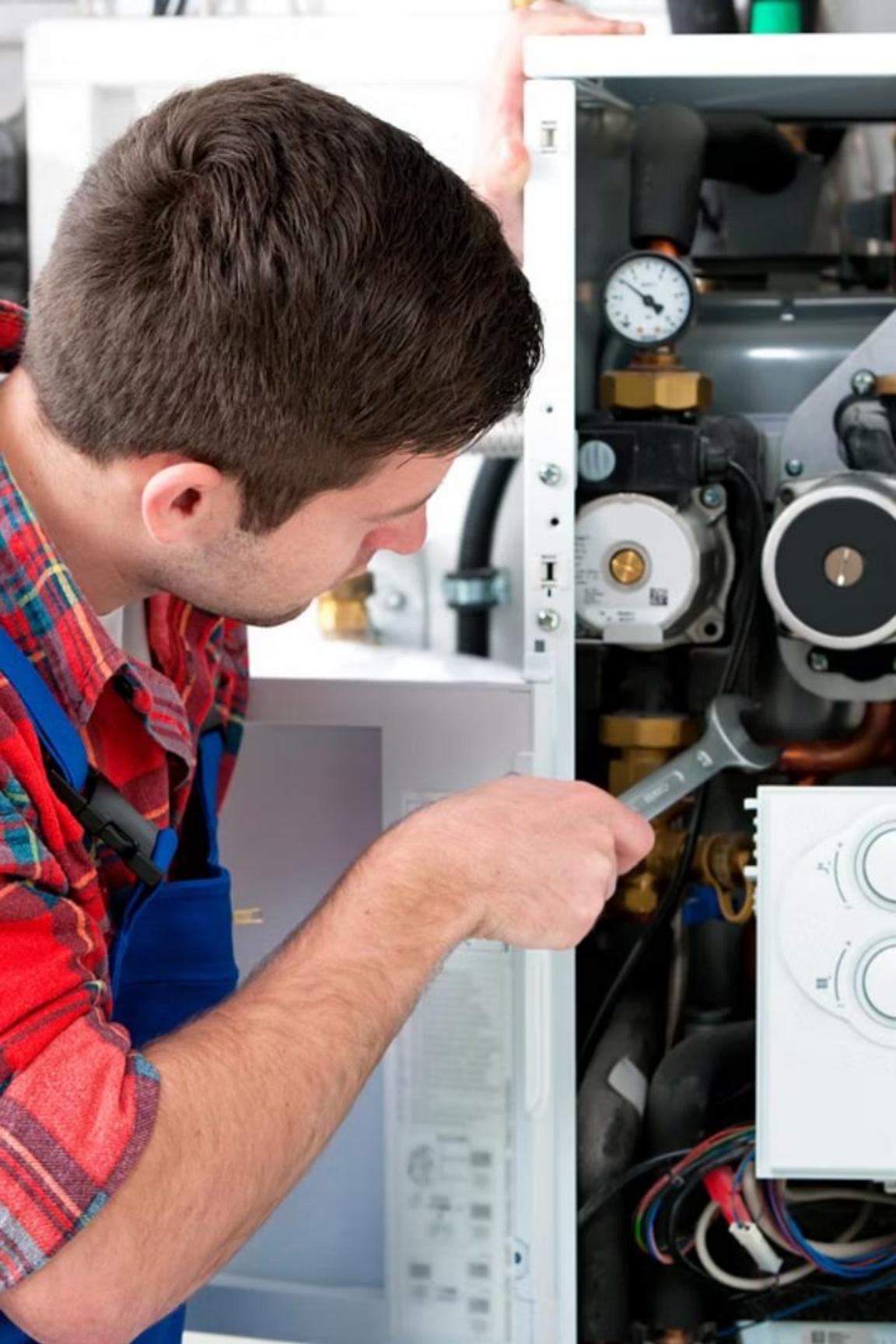
## Aesthetic Priority

Varying cultural emphasis on visual appearance of installations



## Functional Priority

Different cultural focus on practical operation over appearance



# Cultural Perspectives on Professional Boundaries

## Formal Relationship Cultures

Some cultures maintain clear professional boundaries.

- Common in Northern European, North American, and some East Asian contexts
- Strictly business interactions expected
- Limited personal conversation
- Clear distinction between service provider and customer

## Relationship-Building Cultures

Other cultures blend professional and personal interactions.

- Common in Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Latin American contexts
- Personal connection expected before business
- May invite service providers to share meals
- Ongoing relationship development valued

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Expert Advice



Gas technicians should recognize that cultures vary in how they receive expert advice. Some cultures automatically defer to professional recommendations, while others may question extensively or consult with family members before accepting suggestions. Understanding these differences helps technicians present information in the most effective way for each customer.

# Cultural Perspectives on Home Access

## Private Domain Cultures

Some cultures consider the home a strictly private space.

- May require advance notice for all visits
- Specific protocols for entering the home
- Certain areas may be off-limits
- Presence of family member usually required

## Open Access Cultures

Other cultures have more fluid boundaries around home access.

- More comfortable with service providers working independently
- May provide keys or access codes
- Fewer restrictions on movement within the home
- May not require constant supervision



# Cultural Attitudes Toward Appliance Use

## Traditional Cooking Methods

Some cultures maintain specific traditional cooking practices that affect gas usage

## Energy Conservation Practices

Varying cultural approaches to energy usage and conservation

## Appliance Adaptation

Different cultural modifications to standard appliance usage

## Seasonal Variations

Cultural differences in seasonal appliance usage patterns

# Cultural Perspectives on Communication Style

## Direct Communication Cultures

Some cultures value straightforward, explicit communication.

- Common in North American, German, and Scandinavian contexts
- Explicit verbal messages
- Say exactly what they mean
- Value efficiency in communication

## Indirect Communication Cultures

Other cultures communicate more implicitly and contextually.

- Common in many East Asian, Middle Eastern, and some Latin contexts
- Rely on context and non-verbal cues
- May hint rather than state directly
- Prioritize harmony over clarity

# Cultural Attitudes Toward Written Information



## Documentation Value

Varying cultural emphasis on written records and instructions



## Translation Needs

Different requirements for multilingual documentation



## Visual Preference

Some cultures prefer visual instructions over text



## Verbal Preference

Other cultures prioritize verbal explanations over written materials



# Cultural Perspectives on Follow-Up



## Completion Verification

Cultural differences in confirming work completion



## Follow-Up Contact

Varying expectations about post-service communication



## Ongoing Relationship

Different cultural views on service provider relationships



## Feedback Approaches

Cultural variations in how feedback is provided



# Cultural Attitudes Toward Training and Education

## Customer Education Focus

Some cultures expect technicians to provide detailed education.

- Want to understand how systems work
- Expect training on proper usage
- Appreciate detailed maintenance instructions
- May want to learn basic troubleshooting

## Expert Reliance Focus

Other cultures prefer to rely on the expert for all aspects.

- Less interest in understanding technical details
- Prefer to call professional for all issues
- May view excessive explanation as unnecessary
- Trust the technician to handle everything

# Summary: Respecting Cultural Differences

**Educate Yourself**  
Learn about different cultures you may encounter



**Adapt Approach**  
Modify service style to accommodate cultural differences

**Communicate Clearly**  
Use simple language and confirm understanding

Everyone, regardless of race, creed, or colour, deserves the same quality of service and treatment. By understanding cultural differences and implementing appropriate strategies, gas technicians can provide excellent service to all customers while respecting their unique cultural backgrounds and preferences.