

13) Match the statement with its corresponding description.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) Customer suddenly displays a clenched fist and tense body posture: | A circumstance that could put you at risk |
| b) Avoid wearing expensive jewelry: | A circumstance that could put you at risk |
| c) Entering a home where the customer or another adult representative is not on the premises at all times. | Personal safety tip |
| d) When in the customers home, they become agitated and start using an aggressive tone of voice: | Personal safety tip |
| e) If feeling threatened, get away to a safe location: | Dealing with potential violence |
| f) Entering a home where young children or minors are alone on the premises—no adult supervision: | Dealing with potential violence |
| g) Putting yourself in a situation that could result in personal and company reputations and actions being criticized: | Personal safety tip |
| h) Being more cautious at night: | A circumstance that could put you at risk |

4. Understanding cultural differences

Overview

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.

10) What should you do when a customer becomes unruly or threatening?

- a) Seek assistance. If violence is threatened, call the police
- b) Shut off the fuel supply and mark the work order that the system has been tagged
- c) Lock the meter or shut off the fuel supply and lock it

11) Match the word that best completes each sentence/ statement:

- | | |
|--|------------|
| a) Utilizing _____ listening techniques assures the customer of your attentiveness to their problem: | Arrogant |
| b) _____ to a customer's remarks in a confident, serious, and professional manner indicates you understand the seriousness of their concerns: | Effective |
| c) Ensuring you do not display _____ body language or speak to the customer in a detrimental manner shows your respect for him/her: | Responding |
| d) Listening for _____ as well as facts assists the gas technician/fitter in assessing the urgency the customer has in having the problem resolved: | Value |
| e) By taking notes when the customer is explaining what they've noticed, you are indicating to the customer you _____ his/her input: | Empathy |
| f) Using the proper choice of words that show _____ 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: | Feelings |

12) Match the appropriate type of customer to each example provided.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| a) Customer begins to tell you about how their day is going—turn the topic of conversation towards the specific trouble—the complaint: | Unresponsive customer |
| b) Customer tends to answer questions with a yes or no—pose questions that require full sentence answers: | Talkative customer |
| c) Customer is shouting—listen attentively, let the customer continue until their anger is defused: | Customer suppressing anger |
| d) Customer insists on being uncooperative—make comments directed towards finding a solution to the problem: | Obstinate customer |
| e) Customer tone of voice indicates anger, but the words do not—try to get the customer to talk about what is the concern: | Hostile customer |

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

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. Some of the issues that define cultural differences include:

- use of space and time;
- religious history and practices;
- work, property, family, and home values;
- gender and personal values and expectations; and
- traditional dress, food, and beverages.

Barriers to cross-cultural communication

Some of the barriers to cross-cultural communication and understanding include:

- language and non-verbal communication patterns;
- stereotyping; and
- different value systems.

Overcoming barriers to cross-cultural Communication

Common misconceptions of various cultures can create barriers to cross-cultural communication. It is important to identify incorrect perceptions and assumptions about other cultures in order to overcome them. Establishing communication with people of other cultures and practicing tolerance and understanding goes a long way toward overcoming cross-cultural barriers.

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

Dealing with customers with limited English proficiency

One common problem when dealing with people of other cultures is the language barrier. However, you can assist communication with customers who speak little or no English by following these tips:

- Learn a few phrases of the language that the customer speaks.

- 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.
- Practice slowing down your speech and not speaking louder.
- 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..."

- 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.

Overcoming cultural differences affecting work issues

Cultural differences and possible work issues

Some of the possible cultural differences affecting work issues include:

- timelines and scheduling of work;
- priority systems;
- contractual details and consent;
- payment terms and procedures;
- expectations regarding service; and
- access to property.

Suggested strategies to accommodate

You may need to implement the following strategies to accommodate cultural differences affecting work issues:

- Adjust work schedules to respect religious or cultural practices.
- Make an extra effort to clarify the work you will do and what the customer can expect.
- Explain company policies and procedures and confirm an agreement before beginning work.
- Use an interpreter or consider other cultural differences to resolve a misunderstanding with a customer if problems arise.
- Acknowledge and observe rules of appropriate behaviour with respect to customer's home or place of business.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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