

# Looking after your customers during COVID-19

*Last Updated: 30 September 2020*

While this is a difficult time for business, you still need to look after your customers. Find out how to protect customer safety, understand their rights and keep them supporting your business.

## Protect customer safety

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You must make sure that your business isn't increasing the risk of customers and others contracting COVID-19.

Some of the ways you can protect your customers include:

- [requiring both customers and staff to use social distancing](#)
- [using contactless deliveries and payments](#)
- [requiring good hygiene practices](#)
- [regularly cleaning and disinfecting your workplace](#)
- keeping non-essential people away from your workplace

There's no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through food. But if you have a food business, you still need to use good food safety practices and protect your customers from the risk of COVID-19 exposure.

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[Find COVID-19 advice for food businesses.](#)

 FOOD STANDARDS AUSTRALIAN NEW ZEALAND

## Communicate with your customers

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It's important to let your customers know what your business is doing in response to coronavirus.

Let them know:

- if you're affected by restrictions or you've closed temporarily
  - about any changes to your products or services
  - how you're looking after their safety in your premises and products
  - how you're managing cancellations or delays
  - their options for accessing your products or services
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Understand the different ways to communicate with customers.

→ HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS

## Improve online customer service

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With the coronavirus restrictions in place, you may find you need to interact more online with your customers rather than face-to-face.

Check these tips to develop good online customer relationships:

- Answer emails promptly – aim for a 24 hour turnaround.
  - Keep a log of any phone interactions you have with your customers.
  - Publish important information about your business on your website.
  - Consider adding a feedback form to your website.
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Find out about running your business online.

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## Handling customer cancellations and changes

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If you're managing cancellations, delays or changes to products and services, make sure you know your obligations and your customers' rights.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) website has guidance on:

- travel cancellations and changes
- event cancellations
- product and service changes

- gym memberships
- wedding cancellations

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[Check advice for small business to manage cancellations or changes to products and services.](#)

[!\[\]\(c507f772dba2b921f86777f01218e570\_img.jpg\) AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION & CONSUMER COMMISSION](#)

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[Understand consumer rights during COVID-19.](#)

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[Learn how to handle GST and FBT when a sale or event is cancelled.](#)

[!\[\]\(cbe2492b119e39e02a1dab2af4a4b296\_img.jpg\) AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE](#)

## Handling customer complaints

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During this challenging time, you may receive customer complaints about a product or service your business provides. It's a good idea to establish a procedure to help you handle customer complaints in a calm and professional manner.

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[Learn how to deal with customer complaints and develop a process for your business.](#)

→ [HOW TO MANAGE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS](#)

## Setting prices that are fair to customers

### Price-gouging

Businesses are free to set the prices of their products or services. Neither the ACCC or your local state or territory agency have roles in setting prices.

But the Australian Consumer Law does protect consumers from [unconscionable conduct](#) [!\[\]\(7d1d6890825e83a6a4a51febe2dcc7f3\_img.jpg\)](#) by businesses. This means you shouldn't exploit customers, especially if your product or service is critical to health or safety.

Whilst there isn't a precise legal definition for unconscionable conduct, you should always ensure that your conduct isn't so harsh that it goes against good conscience.

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[Find the latest information on increasing product prices due to COVID-19.](#)

## Pricing protective medical products

To ensure that protective gear and disinfectants reach those who need it most, the government has limited how much you can sell them for.

You now can't sell a range of medical personal protection equipment (PPE) for more than 120% of the price they were bought for.

If you do, you risk a fine of \$63,000 or 5 years in jail if you do not surrender the goods to the law.

This includes:

- disposable face masks, gloves and gowns
- goggles, glasses or eye visors
- alcohol wipes and hand sanitiser

These measures are not designed to affect normal consumer buying of goods, commercial imports and exports, or other bulk sales.

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[Read the COVID-19 update to the Biosecurity Act 2015.](#)

 FEDERAL REGISTER OF LEGISLATION

## Read next

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[Find out about marketing your business during COVID-19.](#)

→ MARKETING