



MERCHANT PUBLIC SAFETY TIP SHEET

In this tip sheet, you will find examples of common situations between merchants and potential patrons, and how to handle common but sometimes awkward interactions. While this sheet uses a cafe as an example, these interaction examples can easily be tweaked to fit any downtown business.

NONPAYING:

After welcoming a customer, they should make a purchase within 15 minutes. If they have no apparent or declared reason to wait longer than that amount of time to become a paying customer, they may be respectfully asked to leave.

Here's a script to help you politely ask a guest to make a purchase or to leave:

Good [morning/afternoon]. Just checking in—if you need more time, no problem at all. We do ask that guests make a purchase within about 15 minutes. If you're waiting for someone or need more time, just let us know. Otherwise, if today's not the day, no worries, and we hope to see you again soon!

SOLICITING:

No soliciting of any kind is allowed inside the cafe or at the outdoor tables. This includes political, business, surveying, or any other forms of solicitation. Guests engaging in these activities will be politely asked to stop, as we maintain a strict "no soliciting" policy to ensure a comfortable environment for everyone.

Here's a script to help you politely ask someone to stop soliciting:

Hi there! I just wanted to kindly remind you that we have a no-soliciting policy here, which includes things like political discussions, business promotions, or surveys. We try to keep things comfortable and relaxed for everyone. I'd really appreciate it if you could stop. Thanks so much for understanding!

ASKING OTHERS FOR MONEY OR FOOD:

We have a firm policy that it is unacceptable to engage in requesting money or free food from other customers, whether inside the cafe or outside at the patio tables.

Here's a script to help you tell someone to stop asking for food or money:

Hey, I just want to let you know that we have a firm policy against asking other customers for money or food, whether you're inside or on the sidewalk. We try to keep things comfortable for everyone, so I'd appreciate it if you could stop.

MAKING ROOM DURING BUSY TIMES:

During busy times, when seating is difficult to find, customers who have been present for more than an hour, without purchasing something recently, may be asked to kindly move and make space to welcome newly arriving guests.

Here's a script to help you politely ask a guest to make some space:

Hi there! We've had a lot of guests coming in, and seating has become a bit limited. Since you've been here for a while, would you mind making space by moving to the bar areas? We really appreciate your understanding. Thank you!

RESTROOMS FOR CUSTOMERS ONLY:

The restrooms in the cafes are for customers. Do not share the entry code if the person requesting it is not a paying customer. If they are clearly in distress, elderly or a child, it is encouraged to share the code regardless of whether they've made a purchase or not.

Here's a script to help you politely share that our restrooms are for customers only:

Hi! Just a heads up, our restrooms are for customers, so we can't share the code unless you've made a purchase. Thanks for understanding.

EXCESSIVE BELONGINGS:

Customers may be limited on the amount of personal belongings they bring into the cafe. Bringing more than a backpack or bags that can be stored under the table they are sitting at should be diverted to remaining outside.

Here's a script to help you politely ask a guest to leave items outside:

Hi there! Just a quick heads-up, we ask that any extra bags beyond a backpack or what fits under your table be kept outside. Thanks so much for helping us keep the cafe tidy.

DISTURBING THE PEACE OR MAKING OTHERS UNCOMFORTABLE:

Guests who are disturbing others, making anyone feel uncomfortable, being extraordinarily loud, playing their phone or computer audio without headphones, the source of unpleasant odors, making unprofessional comments or glances, and generally disturbing the peace and enjoyment of others are to be respectfully asked to refrain from those actions or leave the cafe.

Here's a script to help you politely ask a guest to refrain from certain activities:

Hi there. We've noticed that [specific action] is affecting the comfort of our [team or guests]. Could you please adjust so everyone can enjoy their time here? If not, we may have to ask you to leave. Thanks so much for understanding!

PETS IN THE CAFE:

Guests who bring their pets into the cafe should do so only to place their order and should then be asked to wait by the door or outside. Service animals are permitted in the cafe unless they are being disruptive.

Here's a script to help you politely ask a guest to keep their pet outdoors:

"Hi there, Your pet is adorable but our cafe policy is to keep pets outside the dining area to maintain food safety standards. Would you mind taking your furry friend outside to wait? We'll bring your order out as quickly as we can. Thank you for understanding."

***if they say it is a service animal you should respond with "okay, thank you for letting me know. If it remains by your side and is a certified service animal, it is fine to remain in the dining room."*