

## De-Escalation - Working with the Public

De-escalation techniques are crucial when working with the public, as they allow individuals to defuse potentially dangerous or volatile situations. These techniques can be used in a variety of settings, including customer service, retail, hospitality, and security. By learning how to stay calm and composed, listen actively, avoid confrontation, use “I” statements, take a break, and seek help when needed, individuals can effectively defuse tense situations and find a peaceful resolution. Furthermore, when individuals can de-escalate a situation, they not only help maintain a safe environment, but also helps to build trust with the public, which can lead to improved relationships, increased customer satisfaction, and even a reduction in complaints or legal issues.

### What’s the Danger?

There are several dangers associated with de-escalation when working with the public. Some of the main risks include:

<b>Personal Safety</b>	<b>Emotional Stress</b>
Individuals can be at risk of physical harm when dealing with the public. It is important to be aware of potential hazards and have a plan to protect oneself.	Dealing with difficult or hostile individuals can be challenging emotionally and can lead to burnout, anxiety, or depression.
<b>Legal Risks</b>	<b>Reputation Damage</b>
De-escalation and working with the public can lead to legal risks, such as false accusations, discrimination, or civil rights violations.	De-escalation and working with the public can lead to negative publicity and damage an organization’s reputation if not handled correctly.
<b>Inadequate Training</b>	<b>Making the Situation Worse</b>
If individuals do not have adequate training, they may not know how to handle difficult situations, leading to increased risks of harm or legal issues.	If the de-escalation techniques are not used properly, it can make the situation worse, increasing the level of agitation and danger.

### Safety Tips

- ✓ **Listen actively** – Give the person your full attention and try to understand their point of view. Show them that you care about their concerns and that you’re willing to help.
- ✓ **Avoid confrontation** – When possible, try to avoid confrontations and instead look for ways to defuse the situation. This might involve acknowledging the person’s feelings and offering a compromise or solution that meets everyone’s needs.
- ✓ **Use “I” statements** – Instead of making accusations or placing blame, use “I” statements to express your own feelings and concerns. For example, instead of “You’re wrong” say “I see things differently”.
- ✓ **Take a break** – If the situation is becoming too heated, it’s okay to take a break to cool down and regroup. This will give you the opportunity to reassess the situation and come up with a new strategy.
- ✓ **Seek help if needed** – If you feel unsafe or unable to handle the situation on your own, don’t hesitate to ask for help from a supervisor or other team member.
- ✓ **Use humor if appropriate** – Humor can be a powerful tool in de-escalating a situation, but be careful not to make light of someone’s concerns or use it in a way that might be offensive.

De-escalation is a complex process that requires proper training and ongoing practice to be effective. It’s important to be patient and to stay focused on finding a peaceful resolution.



# SAFETY TALKS

## *De-Escalation - Working with the Public*

### **Demonstrate**

Review company policies and reporting procedures for harassment and violence with workers.

Review company emergency procedures including dealing with the public (robbery, theft, armed intruder, etc.)

### **Discussion**

Can you describe a specific situation in which you had to use de-escalation techniques when working with a member of the public?

What have you found to be the most important aspect of de-escalation when working with the public? Why do you feel this was effective?

