

For everyone

Community Guidelines

How people treat each other on ToolBox, in plain words: what we ask of everyone, what we do with a message that crosses a line, and where the line is.

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IN SHORT

- Be who you say you are, and talk to people the way you would at their front door.
- Keep the conversation, the quote and the payment in ToolBox, where there is a record that protects you both.
- Messages and photos are checked for abuse, sexual content and contact details shared before a hire. A person, not a filter, decides anything that is removed.
- Report or block anyone from where you see them. Safety reports are read the same day.

A plain summary to orient you. The sections below are the agreement.

1. What this is for

Every job on ToolBox starts as a conversation between two people who have never met. One is about to let the other into their home; the other is about to spend a day of their working life there on a stranger's word. These guidelines are the way we ask both of them to behave so that the first message can be trusted, and everything after it too.

They are written for everyone: homeowners, tradespeople, and anyone working under a tradesperson on a ToolBox job. They sit alongside **The ToolBox Standard** (toolbox.africa/legal/standard), which is what every verified tradesperson commits to, and the **Acceptable use policy** (toolbox.africa/legal/acceptable-use), which is the rulebook these guidelines are the plain-language front of. Where the two say the same thing in different words, the policy is the one we enforce.

2. Be who you say you are

One account, one real name, one real business. A tradesperson's profile is the CV a homeowner hires from; a homeowner's job is the brief a tradesperson prices from. Both only work if they are true.

- Describe your trade, your registrations and your experience as they are. Verification is there to confirm them, not to be talked around.

- Describe the job as it is, including the parts you would rather not mention. A surprise on the day is what most disputes are made of.
- Use your own photographs, of your own work or your own home.
- Do not pretend to be another person, another business, or ToolBox.

3. Talk the way you would face to face

The thread is the front door. Say what you would say on the doorstep, in the tone you would use there.

- Be courteous, even when you are declining, cancelling or disagreeing. "Thanks, I'll go with someone else" is a complete message.
- Reply. A homeowner waiting on a quote and a tradesperson waiting on a decision are both stuck. If the answer is no, say so and let them move on.
- No abuse, threats, slurs or unwanted attention, on the platform or off it. There is no context in which these are part of a job.
- No pressure. A quote is an offer, not a deadline; a review is a right, not a bargaining chip.

4. Keep it in ToolBox

The record protects both of you

A price agreed in a message here is a price we can hold either side to. A change of scope written in the thread is a change we can see. A payment made through the pay sheet is one we can trace, and the proof of payment a **ToolBox Guarantee** (toolbox.africa/legal/guarantee) claim is assessed on. None of that is true of a WhatsApp, a phone call or cash at the door.

- **Quote and agree changes in the thread.** If the job grows on the day, write it down here before the work is done, so the number you both remember is the same number.
- **Pay through ToolBox.** The pay sheet on the job is how a deposit and the balance are settled. A tradesperson will never ask you to send money to bank details typed into a message, and a homeowner will never be asked to.
- **Numbers are shared when it is time.** A tradesperson's phone number appears on the job once you hire them, and until then the thread is the channel, for both sides' sake. Until the hire, phone numbers, email addresses, links, social media names, street addresses and bank details are taken out of what either of you writes before the other sees it, and you both see a note where that happened. A photo in a message that shows any of these opens for the other person once the job is booked. Card and ID numbers are taken out at any stage, because nobody needs them to do a job. A number or bank account in a message from someone you have not hired is what most fraud on a platform like this looks like.
- **Photographs go to the job.** The photographs you add to a job are shown to the tradespeople it is sent to, before you hire, so they can price the work. Only you and they can open them, and the location a phone camera stores in a photo is taken out before anyone sees it.

- **A job's details are for that job.** Contact details, photographs and addresses you receive for a job are not a mailing list, a portfolio or a lead for anyone else.

5. Stay safe in someone's home

Most of what happens on ToolBox happens behind a front door, out of anyone's sight but the two people there. That is exactly why the guidelines for it are short and firm.

- **Homeowners:** you may ask a tradesperson to leave at any time, for any reason, and you owe no explanation and no payment for work not done. Then tell us.
- **Tradespeople:** if a homeowner's behaviour makes you unsafe, leave. Tell us the same way. These guidelines and the **sanctions policy** (toolbox.africa/legal/sanctions) apply to homeowners exactly as they apply to you.
- Nobody works, or is asked to work, under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Children and vulnerable adults in a home are never left in a stranger's care, and never spoken to or photographed without their parent or carer present.
- If you are in immediate danger, phone the SAPS on **10111** first. Deal with us afterwards. **Reporting, blocking and staying safe** (toolbox.africa/legal/community-safety) lists the other numbers.

6. Be fair with reviews

Reviews are the memory of the community. They are only worth something because they are hard to fake and impossible to buy.

- Review the work you paid for, on the job you paid for, as it actually went.
- A tradesperson may ask for a review. They may not ask for a good one, offer anything for one, or make a repair or a refund conditional on one coming down.
- A homeowner may say what went wrong. They may not threaten a bad review to force a discount.
- Every tradesperson has a right of reply, published underneath. Use it the way you would use the thread: to the point, and without heat.

The **Reviews policy** (toolbox.africa/legal/reviews) sets out who can review, what we check, and the few grounds on which a review comes down.

7. Look after other people's information

A photograph of a job is a photograph of someone's home. Treat it that way.

- Do not publish a photograph that shows someone's face, their address, their security or their belongings without asking them.
- Do not share a homeowner's or a tradesperson's number, address or details with anyone who is not on the job.
- Do not collect other people's details from ToolBox for any purpose of your own.

The **Privacy notice** (toolbox.africa/legal/privacy) sets out what we do with your information. This section is about what you do with each other's.

8. What we do with a message

The first time you use messages on ToolBox, we ask you to agree to these guidelines, and that includes what this section describes.

- **Automated checks run first.** Messages, reviews and photographs are screened for spam, scam patterns and content that is not allowed here, before or as they are delivered. Most of what is stopped is spam and fraud, and most people never notice.
- **Some words are not sent at all.** A message with strong swearing, sexual content, a slur or a threat is not sent, and you are asked to say it another way. Everyday words like “kak” or “bloody” are fine.
- **Photographs are checked as they are sent.** One that may be explicit is held for a person to look at before anyone sees it. One that may be sensitive arrives covered, and the person it was sent to chooses whether to open it.
- **A person decides anything that is removed.** Automated screening is wrong in both directions, so nothing is taken down on a filter's say-so alone, and the Report option exists for what the filter misses. A message a check flags as a threat, hate or sexual harassment is held from the other person until someone at ToolBox has looked at it.
- **We tell you.** When we remove or hold something of yours, we say so and say why, unless doing so would put someone at risk or prejudice an investigation.
- **We do not read for the sake of reading.** A thread is looked at by a person when it is reported, when a check flags it, when a complaint or a Guarantee claim turns on what was said, or when the law requires it.

Messages are kept as part of the record of the job, and are what a complaint, a Guarantee claim or a police investigation is assessed on. They are not sold, shared for marketing, or shown to anyone outside the job, the complaint or the law.

9. If someone breaks these guidelines

Report them from where you see them: a profile, a review, a photograph or a message. The context comes with the report, so nobody has to ask what you meant. Reports are confidential, and a report about safety is read the same day.

Block them if you want no more to do with them, with or without a report. They cannot message you, quote you or see your jobs again, and they are not told.

What we do depends on what was done. Some breaches earn a warning; some end an account immediately. **Warnings, suspension and removal** (toolbox.africa/legal/sanctions) sets out the ladder, the process, the notice you get and your right to appeal, and it applies to homeowners and tradespeople alike.

10. Contact

Report something unsafe, read first



Report a breach of these guidelines



Ask a question about them



If you are not sure which desk, use safety. It goes to the front of every queue.

If anything here is unclear, ask before you rely on it. We would rather explain a clause than argue about it later.