

For everyone

Warnings, suspension and removal

Why an account gets sanctioned, what each step means, how an investigation runs, and how to appeal. Applies to homeowners as well as tradespeople.

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IN SHORT

- This applies to homeowners and tradespeople alike. Both sides can be removed.
- Five principles govern every decision, and every one of them is published here.
- Everyone gets an appeal, including in conduct and fraud cases, decided by someone new.
- Section 7 lists the things that end an account immediately. They are all about safety, dishonesty or dignity.

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

1. Why we publish this

A platform that can remove your livelihood, or your ability to hire, owes you a plain account of when it will do that and how. This document is that account. Nothing here should be able to surprise you.

Most platforms publish a removal policy that only ever points at the supplier. Ours points both ways. A tradesperson who is abused in someone's home, or who does good work and is not paid, has the same right to a fair process as the homeowner does.

What this policy enforces, and what it does not

This policy enforces two things: the outcomes a customer is entitled to by law, and the conduct a person is entitled to in their own home. Section 54 of the Consumer Protection Act entitles a homeowner to work done with reasonable care and skill, on time, and to have poor work put right. The Occupational Health and Safety Act and the trade registration laws set what is lawful. This policy holds a tradesperson to those, and to basic decency, and to honesty with us.

It does not tell a tradesperson how to do their work. We do not set methods, hours, prices, materials, tools, or which jobs to take, and nothing here is a ground for sanction because a tradesperson chose a different way of doing a job from the one we might have. Where a ground below mentions quality, it means the outcome fell below what the law entitles the customer to, not that the method was not ours. That distinction matters: a tradesperson on ToolBox runs their own business, and section 4 of the **Terms**

for tradespeople (toolbox.africa/legal/pro-terms) says so. This policy is written to be consistent with that, and if a decision under it ever drifts into directing the manner of work, that decision is wrong and can be appealed on that ground alone.

2. The words we use

Guidance

A conversation. We tell you what we saw and what needs to change. Nothing appears on your profile.

Warning

A formal, recorded notice that something breached our rules. It stays on your record and counts if there is a next time.

Restriction

A specific ability is switched off, such as messaging, leaving reviews, or receiving leads in one trade, while the rest of the account works.

Review period

A defined stretch, normally up to six months, in which you must show a sustained improvement. We tell you exactly what we are measuring and what the target is.

Suspension

The account is switched off temporarily, usually while we investigate. A tradesperson stops appearing in searches and stops receiving leads. It is precautionary. It is not a finding against you.

Removal

The account is closed permanently. A tradesperson stops appearing immediately, and their membership ends 30 days later so that live jobs can be wound down.

3. The principles we work to

Awareness. You should be able to read, in advance, everything that could cost you your account. That is why this document exists and why it is written in ordinary language.

Transparency. We tell you what the allegation is, we tell you the outcome, and we tell you the reasons. The only exception is where saying more would put a person at risk, expose a complainant, or prejudice a police investigation.

Consistency. The same conduct gets the same response, whoever you are and however long you have been here. Volume of business earns nobody a discount.

Proportionality. The response fits what happened. A first missed appointment is a conversation. A pattern of them is a review period. Endangering somebody is the end.

Right of reply. We do not decide anything against you without putting the allegation to you and giving you a real opportunity to answer it. A single complaint, on its own, is an allegation and not a finding.

4. Grounds: tradespeople

These are not exhaustive. Something not listed here can still be a breach if it plainly falls under **The ToolBox Standard** (toolbox.africa/legal/standard).

Safety and competence

- Work that endangers a person or a property: unsafe electrical work, structural work that compromises a building, an unsafe gas installation, work left in a dangerous state.
- Repeatedly ignoring health and safety requirements on site.
- Working outside your competence or your registered scope.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs on a job.

Registration and legal compliance

- Doing notifiable work without the registration the law requires, or letting someone unregistered do it under your name.
- Doing the work and refusing, delaying or falsifying the Certificate of Compliance or Conformity.
- Continuing to trade in a trade after the registration for it has expired, been suspended or been withdrawn.
- Working without insurance you told us you held.
- Failing to tell us within 5 business days that a registration was suspended, withdrawn or not renewed, or that a regulator has opened a case against you.
- A finding against you by PIRB, SAQCC Gas, the ECB, PSIRA, the NHBRC, the CIDB, the Registrar of Act 36 of 1947 or the Department of Employment and Labour.

Honesty and fraud

- Giving us false information or a falsified document during verification or afterwards.
- Misrepresenting your business status, for example trading as a company when you are a sole proprietor, or not telling us that your company was deregistered.
- Claiming a check, a registration, a qualification or an insurance policy you do not hold.
- Claiming ToolBox employs, endorses or guarantees you.
- Misusing the ToolBox name, mark or badge, including after leaving or during a suspension.
- Inflating a price, invoicing for work not done, or manipulating a scope to extract more money.

Conduct toward people

- Discrimination of any kind, including on race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, nationality or age. There is no version of this we tolerate.

- Abuse, threats, intimidation or harassment, whether on site, on the platform or afterwards.
- Any sexual misconduct, or any unwanted sexual attention.
- Physical violence.
- Any criminal conduct connected to a job, including theft from a home.
- Door to door selling off the back of a ToolBox job, or pressure selling in someone's home.

Money

- Taking a deposit and not doing the work.
- Abandoning a job part way through without cause.
- A pattern of failing to refund what is plainly owed.
- Insolvency, business rescue or a judgment that suggests you cannot meet commitments you are taking on. We look at the substance, not the label, and we will talk to you before acting.

Reviews and reputation

- Creating, buying or soliciting fake reviews, or getting someone to leave one who was not the customer.
- Offering anything of value in exchange for a review.
- **Conditioning a repair, a refund or a completion on a review being removed or changed.** This is among the most serious things a tradesperson can do here, because it corrupts the record every other homeowner relies on.
- Pressuring or threatening a customer over a review.

Platform integrity

- Taking a job off the platform to avoid the record, or asking a homeowner to do so.
- Using leads for anything other than quoting on that job, including marketing. See **Fair use** (toolbox.africa/legal/fair-use).
- Opening a second account, or using someone else's, to get around a sanction.
- Scraping, automating or interfering with the platform.
- A high volume of upheld complaints, or of Guarantee claims, whether or not each one on its own was serious.
- A successful Guarantee claim. This normally leads at least to a review period, and often to removal.

5. Grounds: homeowners

Tradespeople are entitled to protection too. A homeowner account can be warned, restricted, suspended or removed for:

- Abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment or discrimination toward a tradesperson or our staff.
- Any sexual misconduct or unwanted sexual attention toward someone working in your home.

- Posting fake jobs, or repeatedly wasting tradespeople's time with no intention of hiring.
- Refusing to pay for work that was properly done and properly agreed.
- **Threatening a bad review, or a Guarantee claim, to force a discount or a free extra.** This is review extortion, and we treat it as seriously as we treat a tradesperson faking a review.
- Leaving reviews that are dishonest, defamatory, or about work you did not buy.
- Asking a tradesperson to do notifiable work without the certificate, or to work around a legal requirement.
- Unsafe or unlawful conditions on site that you knew about and did not disclose.
- Misusing the Guarantee or the complaints process to apply pressure over something else.

6. How complaints turn into decisions

- A complaint is an allegation. It is not a finding, and we do not act as if it is.
- We verify what we can: the job record, the messages, the quote, the invoice, photographs, and the documents behind a verification.
- Anything that could cost someone their account is reviewed by a person, always. Software may flag it. Software never decides it. This is our policy and it is also what section 71 of POPIA requires.
- We put the allegation to you and give you a real chance to answer, normally 10 business days.
- Where the allegation is serious, we may suspend while we investigate. We tell you that we have, and why, unless telling you would put someone at risk.
- We aim to conclude within 30 business days of having what we need, and we tell you if it will take longer.
- We tell you the outcome and the reasons, in writing.

7. Things that end an account immediately

Some conduct is not a matter of escalation. Where we are satisfied it happened, the account is removed on the spot, and there is no ladder to climb first:

- Violence, or a credible threat of it.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Conduct endangering a child or a vulnerable adult.
- Work that put someone's life at risk.
- Theft or fraud against another user.
- Serious falsification of identity or of a safety certificate.

In these cases we also report the matter to the SAPS or to the relevant regulator, and we will support their investigation. Where a complainant's safety is at stake, we may withhold detail from the person removed.

8. Your right to appeal

Everyone gets an appeal. That includes conduct and fraud cases, and it includes a removal that followed a Guarantee claim. We think a policy that removes the appeal precisely where the stakes are highest has it backwards.

How it works:

1. Appeal within **20 business days** of being told, at appeals@toolbox.africa, quoting your reference.
2. Say what you think we got wrong. New evidence helps a great deal, but it is not a condition of being heard. If all you can say is that we misread what was already in front of us, that is a legitimate appeal and we will consider it.
3. The appeal is decided by **someone senior who took no part in the first decision**.
4. We answer within **30 business days**, in writing, with reasons.
5. That decision is final within ToolBox. It does not affect any right you have to go to a court, an ombud or a regulator, and **Complaints and disputes** (toolbox.africa/legal/complaints) tells you how.

While an appeal is running: a suspension over an administrative matter is usually lifted. A removal for anything in section 7 stays in place until the appeal is decided. We are not willing to put somebody back into homes while a safety or conduct allegation is unresolved.

9. Coming back

After a suspension that ends without a finding, the suspension is lifted, your profile returns, and we tell you it is closed. There is no mark on your record.

After a removal, you may apply to rejoin if the ground was administrative or capable of being fixed, and you can show it has been: the registration renewed, the judgment settled, the deposit repaid, the insurance reinstated. You go through full verification again from the start.

You may not rejoin after a removal under section 7, or after serious dishonesty. Opening a new account to get around this is itself a ground for immediate removal, and we do look.

10. What stays, and what goes

- **Reviews stay published.** They belong to the homeowners who wrote them. Removing a business's history when it leaves would mislead the next customer.
- **The profile comes down.** A removed tradesperson stops appearing in search and cannot be contacted.
- **Live jobs are wound down.** A tradesperson's membership ends 30 days after removal so that work already committed to can be finished, unless the removal was under section 7, in which case we notify affected homeowners immediately.
- **Records are kept** for as long as the **Privacy policy** (toolbox.africa/legal/privacy) says, because we have to be able to show that a decision was fair, and because someone removed for safety must not quietly return.

11. When we tell someone else

We report to the SAPS where we believe a crime has been committed against a user. We report to a trade regulator where we believe someone has done notifiable work without registration, or issued a certificate they should not have. We respond to lawful requests from the National Consumer Commission and other regulators. Where we do any of this, we tell the person concerned unless doing so would prejudice the investigation or put someone at risk.

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