



IN REPLY
REFER TO

DEFENSE COMMISSARY AGENCY
HEADQUARTERS
1300 E AVENUE
FORT LEE, VIRGINIA 23801-1800

SOS

February 17, 2016

NOTICE TO THE TRADE – DeCA NOTICE 16-43

SUBJECT: Customer Service: A Combined Effort

Customer Service has always been a pillar of our business and it remains one of DeCA's most key and critical focus items. Our dedication to offering the very best in customer service was recently highlighted in the October, 2015 Director's Corner post, titled *Customer Service Key to our Success* where Mr. Jeu is quoted as saying, "I believe it's time for us in DeCA to refocus our efforts on some key areas that are among the basic tenets of a successful grocery business. One of those key areas is outstanding customer service." With this guidance in mind, training modules and materials have been and continue to be created and distributed to our stores to ensure the highest levels of customer service are provided to our patrons.

The foundation of DeCA's Customer Service Program has been established at our stores and many of our Industry partners have expressed tremendous interest in joining in our efforts to ensure that each and every customer has the very best shopping experience every time they shop in our stores. Industry members represent DeCA in the eyes of customers during their interactions with them and most assume they are DeCA employees.

Industry awareness of current DeCA customer service practices and values will communicate a unified and consistent message during interactions with commissary customers in stores around the world. Industry members will be expected to assist customers in a manner consistent with DeCA customer service training and to use the 5-10 Rule and core phrases. The 5-10 Rule advocates that anytime a patron is within 10 feet, the individual must make eye contact with the customer and smile to acknowledge the oncoming patron. When the patron is approximately 5 feet away, the individual is expected to stop what they are doing and use one of the core phrases, while making eye contact and continuing to offer a smile: (1) ***"Is there anything I can help you with?"*** (2) ***"My pleasure."*** (3) ***"Thank you for your service."***

Asking the question "Is there anything I can help you with?" when the customer is within 5 feet of an individual is a key element of using the 5-10 Rule—ensuring that customers feel welcomed, serving as an introduction for addressing any questions or concerns that the customer may have and driving incremental sales opportunities by helping customers find everything they need. We also ask that if a vendor is asked a question they do not know the answer to, that they bring the customer to the nearest DeCA employee/manager for assistance.

"My pleasure" is the best possible response for a customer's "thank you" and "thank you for your service" and is uniquely appropriate at the end of an interaction with commissary customers because it acknowledges—as only DeCA can—that we appreciate and truly understand what serving their country as a military member or military family member actually means to them!

Vendor usage of the 5-10 rule, our core phrases, and other DeCA customer service practices will add an overall consistency to the customer experience and will yield increases in

the number of transactions, incremental purchases, and customer loyalty and retention. We all know that an increase in customer satisfaction readily translates into increased sales!

It is truly “our pleasure” to work with our Industry partners as we continue to deliver an outstanding shopping experience—each and every day and at every commissary around the world! After all, America’s military members and their families have earned nothing less!

James J. Hudson Jr.
Principal Deputy, Director Store Operations