

Ku-ring-gai Council

Policy

Abandoned Shopping Trolleys

Version Number 2

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Abandoned Shopping Trolleys Policy

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Controlled Document Information

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Related Policies (Council & Internal)	Nil	Nil
Related Documents - Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements, etc	Nil	Nil
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Version History

Version Number	Version Start Date	Version End Date	Author	Details and Comments
1	October 2015	10 December 2019	Anne Seaton	First version
2	11 December 2019	December 2023	Anne Seaton	Content similar, document layout changed so as to reflect standard template as used for all policies.

Policy

Purpose and Objectives

To address the ongoing problem of shopping trolleys being abandoned or left unattended in public places, providing a guide for Council staff, retailers, developers and the community on how to manage shopping trolleys so as to reduce trolley abandonment.

The objectives of the policy being;

- To preserve the visual amenity of the Ku-ring-gai Local Government Area.
- To recognise and respond to community expectations in minimising the problem of abandoned shopping trolleys.
- To provide for the safety of shoppers, pedestrians and road users.
- To clarify Council's obligations in dealing with abandoned or unattended shopping trolleys.
- To guide retailers and shopping centre management on the on-going management of shopping trolleys and Council's expectations.
- To provide a framework and guide for development applicants and Council staff assessing Development Applications for supermarkets and other substantial retail outlets that supply shopping trolleys, on implementation of a trolley containment system that encourages the confinement of trolleys to the retailers' premises.

Scope

This policy applies to all shopping centres, supermarkets and other retail businesses supplying trolleys for its customers that are located within Ku-ring-gai.

Responsibilities

The Director Development and Regulation is responsible for the publicising and implementation of the policy, particularly in regard to the application of the policy to future development applications for shopping centres, supermarkets and other retail stores supplying shopping trolleys for their customers.

Council's regulatory officers will address legislative non-compliances. Regulatory staff will also assist with the reporting of abandoned trolleys so as to ensure quick retrieval by the trolley owners.

The community should recognise that shopping trolleys are provided as a courtesy and a service. Where Council finds it necessary to deal with abandoned trolleys, this cost is ultimately passed onto the ratepayer. The community should acknowledge that it is an offence to abandon a trolley in a public place and this may lead to a fine.

Supermarket shopping centre management should recognise that abandoned shopping trolleys are an environmental and injury risk. That collection and containment of trolleys is their responsibility and that the community at large objects to orphan trolleys being left about the local government area.

Policy Statement

Introduction

Shopping trolleys are an integral part of the retail distribution network. Trolleys are a principal shopping aid providing an effective and practical means of transporting purchased goods.

In times past, shopping trolleys were usually taken from the store to a nearby vehicle. Goods were unloaded and the trolley was either immediately returned to the store or placed within a designated trolley collection area within the shopping precinct. On occasion, trolleys were found outside of the retail area. In recent times, particularly with the increasing housing densities within and near our local centres, trolleys are commonly being found discarded many blocks from any retail store. It is evident that residents living in accommodation near local centres, choose to transport their goods back to their residences in a shopping trolley rather than relying on a motor vehicle. The trolleys once unloaded are discarded on the street verge and are rarely returned to the retailer by the shopper. This practice is creating problems in terms of visual clutter and pedestrian and motoring hazards.

This policy attempts to engage both the retailer and shopper in a more responsible course of action so as to manage this problem within and around our developing local centres.

Background

It is estimated there are more than two million shopping trolleys across the country, or one trolley for every eleven Australians. Many of these trolleys are stolen and left abandoned. Across Australia, the retail industry spends more than \$200 million a year collecting, repairing, maintaining and replacing trolleys. As well as being a significant cost, wayward trolleys can become an environmental hazard in our bushland and waterways.

The difficulties presented in managing shopping trolleys effectively and the risks that abandoned trolleys present vary from store to store, so there is no “one-size fits all” solution. This policy presents a range of options and a process for evaluating and addressing trolley abandonment that can form the basis for discussion with trolley owners and serve to guide Council, as an enforcement authority, in dealing with this problem.

Many in the community are of the opinion that Council may issue monetary penalties against retailers whose shopping trolleys are found abandoned in the local area. This is not correct. Abandoned articles are governed by the Impounding Act 1993. The Act states “a person who abandons an article in a public place is guilty of an offence.” There is no regulatory offence committed by the retailer who supplies the trolley. It is the individual, usually the shopper, who abandons the trolley, that is at fault.

MANAGING THE ISSUE

Assessing the problem

In the first instance, retailers should have a system of regularly monitoring trolley numbers to determine if any are being lost from their stores. Where significant losses are identified, retailers should review their trolley management procedures to identify how these can be reduced.

The risk and urgency of remedial action will be increased by a number of factors such as proximity to vulnerable watercourses or high levels of concern /complaint from the local community.

Tackling the problem

Where a significant trolley abandonment problem is identified retailers will need to take remedial steps. Physically preventing trolleys from leaving shopping centres/ retail areas is always the preferred approach, though this is not always possible.

Where trolleys are not in use for long periods (e.g. when the store is closed) it is good practice to secure them. Where trolleys are being lost during trading hours, several devices are available to make it harder for trolleys to be removed from shops and shopping centres.

These devices are not always appropriate for every store location and will not prevent trolleys being removed by determined persons. There are several devices available including;

- Wheel locking devices fitted to wheels that activate when the trolley crosses cables/ magnetic paving in the ground at either exits or the entire perimeter of the premises.
- Installation of bollards or specialised paving presenting a physical barrier to the removal of trolleys from premises.
- Trolley locks that require insertion of a coin to release the trolley.

So as not to disadvantage any particular retailer, all retailers within a common locality supplying trolleys should adopt a similar approach in the installation of such devices.

Offsite retrieval

Where trolleys from a particular store are known to be regularly abandoned, retailers should have in place a system to ensure trolleys are collected within a reasonable time frame.

Trolley collection service providers usually have agreed routes, servicing known hot spots for abandoned trolleys Centralised services such as “Trolley Trackers” accept general reports from the public, which are referred to the appropriate collector for prompt collection.

Retailers who choose to operate their own independent collection system should ensure that they direct staff to collect trolleys on and off site within a one kilometre radius along designated routes to cover as efficiently as possible the locations where trolleys are most likely to be abandoned.

No matter what system is in place, retailers should advertise the ways in which customers can report abandoned trolleys, e.g. through a local hotline or direct number to the store.

This will help to identify where the trolleys are being abandoned and enable them to be collected quickly.

Publicising systems

Retailers should clearly mark their trolleys so that the owner can easily be identified and alerted, this will assist in the quick return of the trolley to the correct store. Where trolley hotline phone numbers are available, retailers should provide these details on the trolley to assist in the return of trolleys.

Publicising the systems in place may be done in various ways. This may include notices within the retail store both written and verbal over in-store messaging, notices upon trolley endplate advertising signage and advertising in local newspapers or other media.

All educational materials should be supplied in accordance with Council's Access and Equity Policy.

Shopping trolley return bays

Trolley bays provide a simple and effective method for the interim storage and collection of shopping trolleys. They are required to be provided in all car parks utilised by shoppers to encourage shoppers to return trolleys to a single location to minimise potential for injury or damage to other users of the area. Bays may be located in either car parking areas or pedestrian areas depending on which will cause the least inconvenience to users and encourage maximum participation.

Design principles for trolley bays include

- bays should be clearly visible to encourage use and to avoid collisions by cars and pedestrians
- rails or walls should be sufficiently high to be seen by car drivers and pedestrians and should be light coloured and incorporate reflectorised panels if the area is used at night
- bays should be graded so that free rolling trolleys move into rather than out of the bay
- rails should be rounded to reduce chance of injury
- a buffer should be incorporated to stop trolleys rolling right through the bay
- parking bays adjacent to the trolley bay should be treated as though they were next to a wall
- foundations should be designed to resist damage by vandals
- a sufficient number of bays should be provided so that shoppers with young children can safely return a trolley and maintain a line of sight to their vehicle as children may be in a car seat when goods are unloaded
- consideration should be given to supplying trolley bays near bus stops and taxi stands so that shoppers who use public transport can safely nest trolleys before alighting on the bus or within the taxi
- bays should be sufficient in number to encourage easy trolley return by customers

Bays located on Council land require the prior approval of Council and may be subject to payment of an annual fee for lease of the land occupied.

Development Applications relating to stores that supply trolleys

DAs for all future development of stores, both new, and those undergoing significant renovation or upgrade, post adoption of this policy are to include a trolley management system that discourages the removal of trolleys off site.

DAs for supermarkets, department stores and substantial retail outlets are to include a Plan of Management (POM) for the on-site storage, collection, (both on and off site) and the management of shopping trolleys provided by one or more retailers within the shopping centre.

The POM shall include:

- the location and design principles for trolley storage bays.
- a trolley containment system that encourages the confinement of trolleys to the retailer's premises. Containment systems may include the following (but not limited to):
 - coin/token operated systems with refund
 - trolleys with wheel locks activated by radio signal or magnetic strip
 - specialised paving, installation of bollards or other physical barriers that limit the removal of trolleys from the centre
- a map and written schedule of surveillance and collection schedules detailing abandoned trolley services around the local town centres and neighbouring residential areas is to be supplied. This service map and schedule to be reviewed and updated, at least on an annual basis. In particular, the schedule of surveillance and collection should detail the style of service to be offered and the relevant contact details of service provider. Particular attention should be given to those areas known to regularly attract abandoned trolleys, such areas are to be provided with a service at least every 24 hours.

The POM shall also include reference regarding the intended signage and public education programs which may include (but not limited to):

- signage within stores and car parks
- signage at entry and exit points of stores and car parks
- signage on trolleys
- pamphlets in stores explaining the need for customer co-operation
- local newspaper publicity
- in-store messaging over PA systems

The POM should include the commitment of the retailer or shopping centre management to the implementation of actions identified within the POM.

Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition
The Act	Local Government Act 1993
POM	Plan of Management