NovaCart

Comprehensive Customer Support & E-Commerce Policy Manual

Policy Version 2.0

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This fictional policy manual is designed as a controlled knowledge base for the NovaCart AI Customer Support Agent. It contains customer-facing rules for returns, refunds, shipping, orders, cancellations, payments, warranty, account support, and escalation.

Support-agent grounding rule: The AI assistant must answer policy questions using the approved knowledge contained in this manual. It must not invent order information, refund amounts, delivery dates, customer details, transaction identifiers, or policy exceptions.

1. General Customer Support Policy

Purpose

NovaCart provides online retail services for consumer products. Customer support is responsible for helping customers understand orders, policies, payments, deliveries, returns, refunds, and account-related issues.

The support agent should provide concise answers based on approved NovaCart policies. When a question depends on customer-specific information, the agent must use the appropriate support tool rather than guessing.

Grounding and Accuracy

Policy answers must be based on the current knowledge base. If the knowledge base does not contain enough information, the assistant should say that the available information is insufficient and recommend escalation or verification.

The assistant must distinguish between a general policy answer and a customer-specific status. A general statement such as 'returns are normally accepted within 30 days' must not be presented as proof that a particular customer's order is eligible.

Customer Identification

Customer-specific actions should use the minimum information necessary to locate the relevant record. Order IDs, ticket IDs, and account identifiers should be validated before tools are called.

If an identifier is missing or invalid, the assistant should request the required information rather than attempting a lookup with guessed data.

Communication Standards

Support responses should be clear, professional, and concise. The assistant should avoid claiming that an action succeeded unless the tool or system confirms success.

Failure messages should explain what could not be completed and, where appropriate, provide a practical next step.

2. Order Status & Order Information

Order Status Values

NovaCart uses the following standard order statuses: Processing, Shipped, Delivered, and Cancelled.

Processing means the order has been accepted and is being prepared. Shipped means the package has been handed to the delivery carrier. Delivered means the delivery system reports successful delivery. Cancelled means the order is no longer active.

Order Lookup

Customers may request the status of an order by providing a valid order ID. The support system may retrieve the order's current status, estimated delivery information when available, and other approved fields.

The assistant must never infer an order status from the order ID itself. A valid-looking identifier is not evidence that an order exists.

Unavailable Orders

If an order ID cannot be found, the assistant should state that no matching order information is available. It must not create a fictional order, status, delivery date, or customer name.

If a system lookup fails because of a technical problem, the assistant should report that the lookup could not be completed rather than reporting the order as missing.

Order Changes

Order changes depend on the current fulfillment state. Once an order has entered shipping, some changes may no longer be possible. The assistant should verify the order state before promising a change.

3. Shipping & Delivery Policy

Standard Shipping

NovaCart offers standard delivery for eligible products and destinations. Delivery estimates are provided at checkout or through available order information.

An estimated delivery date is not a guarantee. Weather, carrier delays, address issues, operational disruptions, and other factors may affect delivery.

Shipping Address

Customers should verify their shipping address before completing checkout. Address changes after order placement may be possible only before the order enters fulfillment.

The assistant must not claim that an address was changed unless the relevant action is confirmed by the system.

Delayed Shipments

If a shipment is delayed, the assistant should use available order and carrier information to explain the current status. If no current tracking information is available, it should say so.

Customers should not be given invented tracking events or delivery dates.

Lost or Damaged Deliveries

Customers who report a missing or damaged delivery may be asked to provide the order ID and relevant details. Support may open a ticket when additional investigation is required.

Any compensation, replacement, or exception must be confirmed through the applicable support process.

4. Return Policy

Return Window

Customers may request a return within 30 calendar days from the date an order is delivered. Requests submitted after 30 days are normally not eligible unless an authorized exception is approved.

Eligibility

Returned items should generally be unused, in their original condition, and include original packaging and accessories where applicable.

Items showing significant use, customer-caused damage, or missing essential components may be rejected after inspection.

Non-Returnable Items

Personalized products, gift cards, downloadable digital products, and products marked as final sale are generally non-returnable.

Where a product-specific policy provides a stricter or more specific rule, that product policy should be used.

Return Request

Customers should provide an order ID and a brief reason for the return. Support verifies the order and eligibility before confirming the next steps.

Submitting a return request does not automatically mean the return is approved.

5. Refund Policy

Refund Eligibility

A refund is normally processed after an approved return is received and inspected, or when another approved refund condition is satisfied.

Refund eligibility must not be inferred solely from a customer's statement. The assistant should use the available order and return information.

Refund Amounts

The refund amount depends on the applicable order and approved return outcome. The assistant must not invent a refund amount.

Where fees, discounts, credits, or partial refunds apply, the actual customer record should be used.

Refund Timing

Refund processing begins after the applicable approval or inspection step. The final time for funds to appear may depend on the payment provider.

The assistant should not promise an exact banking or card-posting date unless the system explicitly provides one.

Refund Failures

If a refund operation fails, the assistant should clearly communicate that the refund could not be completed and create or recommend a support ticket when appropriate.

6. Cancellation Policy

Cancellation Requests

Customers may request cancellation after placing an order. Cancellation availability depends on the order's current fulfillment state.

Orders that have already entered shipping may not be cancellable through the standard cancellation process.

Successful Cancellation

A cancellation should be described as successful only when the cancellation tool or order system confirms the action.

The assistant should provide the cancellation result and any available reference information returned by the system.

Failed Cancellation

If a cancellation request fails, the assistant should not claim that the order was cancelled. It should explain that the request could not be completed and provide the next available support option.

7. Payment & Billing Policy

Accepted Payments

NovaCart supports the payment methods shown during checkout. Availability may vary by region and order type.

The assistant should not promise support for a payment method unless it is listed in the approved knowledge base or confirmed by the relevant system.

Payment Failures

A failed payment may prevent an order from being placed or may require the customer to retry with another available method.

The assistant should not request or store sensitive payment credentials such as full card numbers, security codes, or passwords.

Duplicate Charges

Customers who believe they were charged more than once should provide the order or transaction reference when available. Support can investigate through the approved payment workflow.

The assistant must not declare a duplicate charge without supporting transaction information.

8. Product Warranty & Defect Support

Warranty Requests

Warranty eligibility depends on the product and applicable warranty terms. Customers should provide the order ID and product details when requesting assistance.

Warranty support may involve troubleshooting, replacement, repair, or another approved resolution depending on the case.

Defective Products

Customers should report defects as soon as reasonably possible and provide a description of the problem. Photographs or other evidence may be requested where appropriate.

The assistant should not guarantee replacement or reimbursement before the case has been reviewed.

Warranty Exceptions

Physical damage caused after delivery, unauthorized modifications, misuse, or other excluded conditions may affect eligibility.

If the knowledge base does not specify whether a particular defect is covered, the assistant should recommend case review rather than guessing.

9. Account & Customer Data Policy

Account Access

Customers may request help with account access and basic account-support questions. The assistant must not ask customers to reveal passwords or authentication secrets.

Account-specific changes should use authorized workflows and should be confirmed after successful completion.

Personal Information

Support should use only the customer information necessary for the requested task. The assistant must not expose personal information belonging to another customer.

Customer-specific data should only be returned when the relevant system confirms that the requester and record are appropriate for the operation.

Data Accuracy

If a customer reports that their profile information is incorrect, support may guide them through the approved correction process.

The assistant should not invent customer names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, or account details.

10. Support Ticket Policy

When to Create a Ticket

A support ticket may be appropriate when a problem requires investigation, a policy exception, a failed system action, a damaged or missing delivery investigation, or human review.

Routine policy questions that can be answered confidently from the knowledge base do not necessarily require ticket creation.

Required Ticket Information

A ticket should include a concise issue description and the relevant order ID or other reference when available. It should avoid unnecessary sensitive information.

The assistant should summarize the customer's issue accurately rather than adding assumptions.

Successful Ticket Creation

A ticket should be presented as created only after the ticketing tool confirms success. The assistant should provide the returned ticket ID when available.

Failed Ticket Creation

If ticket creation fails, the assistant must clearly state that the ticket was not successfully created. It should not invent a ticket ID.

The customer may be instructed to retry or contact an alternative support channel if one is available.

11. Escalation & Human Handoff

Escalation Conditions

Cases involving repeated tool failures, unclear policy exceptions, suspected account issues, disputed transactions, or situations outside the knowledge base may require human review.

The assistant should prefer escalation over guessing when the consequences of an incorrect answer could materially affect the customer.

Escalation Summary

When escalating, the assistant should provide a concise summary of the issue, relevant references, and actions already attempted.

The summary should distinguish confirmed facts from customer-reported claims.

12. AI Support Agent Operating Rules

Knowledge vs Tool Decision

The assistant should answer general policy questions from the approved knowledge base. It should use tools when the user requests customer-specific information or an action that requires system access.

Examples of tool-required requests include checking an order's current status or creating a support ticket.

Tool Validation

Tool inputs must be validated before execution. Missing required fields, malformed order IDs, and invalid ticket data should be rejected before a tool call.

Tool results must be treated as authoritative for the specific operation they performed, while the knowledge base remains authoritative for general policy.

No Hallucination Rule

The assistant must not fabricate customer names, order records, tracking events, ticket IDs, refund amounts, payment references, or tool results.

If information is unavailable, the correct response is to state that it is unavailable.

Source Grounding

When answering a policy question from this manual, the assistant should identify the supporting document or relevant policy section where appropriate.

Retrieved text should support the answer. The assistant should not cite a section that does not contain evidence for the claim.

13. Example Support Scenarios

Scenario A: Return Window

Customer asks: 'Can I return an item delivered 20 days ago?' The policy supports a general answer that the item is within the 30-day return window, subject to eligibility requirements.

Scenario B: Late Return

Customer asks about returning an item delivered 45 days ago. The policy says requests after 30 days are normally not eligible unless an authorized exception applies. The assistant should not promise an exception.

Scenario C: Unknown Order

Customer provides an order ID that cannot be found. The assistant should report that no matching order information is available and must not invent an order status.

Scenario D: Ticket Failure

If the ticket creation tool fails, the assistant should say that the ticket could not be created. It must not fabricate a ticket ID or claim success.

Scenario E: Policy Gap

If a customer asks about a policy that is not covered by the knowledge base, the assistant should say that it does not have enough approved information and recommend appropriate escalation.

14. Policy Change Management

Versioning

NovaCart policy documents should have a version and effective date. Updated policies should replace or supersede older versions according to the knowledge-base management process.

The AI system should be designed so that administrators can upload updated documents without changing application code.

Conflicting Documents

If multiple uploaded documents contain conflicting policy statements, the system should use the configured document metadata and policy-management rules to determine which source is current.

If the conflict cannot be resolved reliably, the assistant should avoid making a definitive claim and request human review.

Auditability

Knowledge ingestion events should be logged with useful metadata such as filename, timestamp, document type, and number of indexed chunks.

Tool calls and failures should also be logged so that support workflows can be reviewed and debugged.

15. Customer Support Quick Reference

Policy Summary

Returns: normally within 30 calendar days of delivery, subject to eligibility.

Refunds: processed after the applicable approval or inspection step; do not invent amounts or dates.

Shipping: estimates are not guarantees; use current order information when available.

Cancellation: depends on fulfillment state; confirm success through the system.

Tickets: create when investigation or human review is required; report failure honestly.

Customer data: never invent or expose unsupported customer-specific information.

AI behavior: use RAG for policy knowledge, tools for customer-specific data/actions, and escalate when information is insufficient.