

## PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE OVERVIEW

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This guide outlines the progressive discipline process including a step by step guide on when to have a conversation, what style to use, how to be prepared for it and how to document it. It is imperative when applying a progressive discipline process that you complete documentation whenever a meeting takes place, even if it is a verbal warning. Documentation relevant to disciplinary matters should be included in the employee's personnel file and should be kept until the employee is not longer active.

When determining an effective timeline for retention of discipline warnings, whether verbal or written, it is important to allow your process to be adaptable to the type of behaviour and the number and span between occurrences. For example, best practices indicate that allowing lateness and absenteeism issues to revert after six (6) months is sufficient time to discipline the employee into termination if necessary or allow them to redeem themselves. A health and safety issue warrants the employee to have a written warning but a second occurrence would result in a suspension. This is due to the severity of the consequences that could arise if carelessness was permitted in the workplace.

When an event requiring disciplinary action arises, you must take into account the following:

- Is the employee aware of the policy or expected behaviour?
- Have I objectively gathered all the facts?
- Has the employee had the opportunity to respond?
- Am I responding quickly, consistently, and reasonably?
- Has the employee been previously counselled?
- Do prior performance evaluations substantiate the employee's ongoing performance deficiencies?
- Has progressive discipline been applied? If not, why not?
- Is the case well documented?
- Is the discipline reasonably related to the seriousness of the offense?
- Has the employee had previous disciplinary action regarding this issue?
- If your decision will result in suspension without pay or termination, we encourage you to contact the Human Resources Department to ensure that all regulations and steps have been taken to mitigate legal issues.

Once you have been able to answer all the above questions and gathered the information necessary, you will be ready to have a disciplinary conversation. Depending on the type of conversation (i.e. a verbal, written, notice of suspension or termination), you will have different documentation, tone and a different conversation length.

## Before the Meeting

- Ensure that a private meeting room or office is available for the meeting.
- Inform the employee that a meeting is required.
- Prepare documentation and notes for discussion in the meeting and have a plan prepared for actions that will be taken.

## The Meeting

- Ensure that the meeting is held in a private location, and that an extra witness is present.
- Describe the offense, how it contravenes (Company Name) policy, provide direction for correction of the situation, and inform them that where another offense occurs, the disciplinary action will escalate to a written warning, and a review of their employment with (Company Name).
- Give the employee the opportunity to explain his/her actions, and either admit wrongdoing or defend his/her actions.
- Provide the employee with a written notice of the meeting, describing the discussion that took place, objectives for the employee, and requirements set forth.
- Ensure that the employee signs the document, and maintain the signed copy in his/her personnel file.
- Provide the employee with a copy of the document for his/her records.
- Remind the employee that his/her contributions to the company are valued, and that you want to see them improve and succeed.

## Key: Disciplinary Actions

V:	Verbal warning (written documentation of such is necessary)
W:	Written warning
S:	Disciplinary suspension, or where appropriate, final written warning in lieu of suspension
T:	Termination

## Work Violations and Possible Responses

Work place violations can occur for many different reasons and each violation should be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case basis prior to taking disciplinary action. The following table

is a description of possible responses only, and it is not intended to be used as a strict guideline.

Description	Violation			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Before taking any disciplinary action, ensure that the nature, frequency and seriousness of the offense are evaluated.				
1. Sub-standard performance levels	V	W	S	T
2. Poor attendance	V	W	W	S
3. Unapproved and/or unreported absence	V	W	W	S
4. Violation of dress code	V	W	W	S
5. Inappropriate use of language	V	W	S	T
6. Violation of technology policy, and/or confidentiality	W	S	T	
7. Violation of health and safety policy and/or procedures	W	S	T	
8. Insubordination	V	W	S	T
9. Unauthorized use of company property.	V	W	S	T
10. Harassment / Bullying	W	S	T	
11. Reporting for duty under the influence of alcohol or narcotics	W	S	T	
12. Fraud, or falsification of documents	S	T		
13. Violation of the Anti-Violence Policy	S	T		
14. Illegal activity on company premises	T			
15. Disclosure of confidential information	S	T		

## WRITING DISCIPLINE DOCUMENTS

Written discipline documents are usually organized in three sections:

**Section 1** should spell out what unacceptable action occurred and the potential impact to others or the business including the date and time if available.

**Section 2** should provide direction as to what specific change in behaviour is required in the future.

**Section 3** must clearly spelled the consequences if the activity or behaviour is repeated in the future.

Issuing discipline should not be personal. It should focus on the individual's behaviour. Please try and control your own emotions and try to maintain a respectful approach with the employee. The discipline process is progressive in that the consequences of not following the noted instruction will become more serious if the employee chooses not to follow the direction they have been given.