

What It's Actually Like to Use File

A preview for managers who've never issued a warning before

Let's Address the Elephant in the Room

You've probably heard your company is looking at a disciplinary management system. And your first thought was probably: "Great, more software to learn. More training. More things to remember."

This isn't that.

File was designed for managers who have never done HR before and don't want to become HR experts. If you can use WhatsApp, you can use File.

The Anxiety Most Managers Feel

Let's be honest about what makes disciplinary conversations difficult.

Fear of getting it wrong. Labour law is complicated. You've heard horror stories about CCMA cases. The last thing you want is to do something that gets the company—or yourself—in trouble.

Not knowing what to say. What's the right language? What must you include? What should you avoid saying?

Paperwork stress. Even if you handle the conversation well, how do you document it properly? What form do you use? Where does it go?

The awkwardness. These are difficult conversations with people you work with every day. Adding uncertainty about process makes them worse.

File addresses all of these. Not by making you an HR expert, but by guiding you through each step so you can focus on the conversation, not the procedure.

What Happens When You Need to Issue a Warning

Let's walk through a real scenario.

Say one of your team members, Thabo, has been arriving late repeatedly. You've spoken to him informally twice, but it's still happening. You need to issue a formal warning.

Old way: Find a template somewhere. Try to remember what happened and when. Write something up. Hope you've covered everything. Get signatures on paper. File it somewhere. Worry that you missed something important.

With File: Open the app on your phone or computer. Tap "Issue Warning." The system guides you through everything. Done in 15 minutes with a professional document you're confident about.

The Ten Phases in Plain Language

File uses a ten-phase process. That sounds like a lot, but each phase takes about 1-2 minutes. Think of it as ten simple questions rather than one complicated form.

Phase 1: Who's involved? Search for Thabo's name. His profile comes up, showing his department, his role, and importantly, any previous warnings. You immediately know: has he been warned before? For what? Is that warning still valid?

Phase 2: What type of issue is this? Select from categories like attendance, conduct, or performance. The system then does something clever—it looks at Thabo's history and suggests an appropriate warning level based on South African law.

Maybe it says: "Based on no prior attendance warnings, a first written warning is recommended." You're not guessing. You have guidance.

Phase 3: What happened? Describe the incident in plain terms. Date, time, what specifically occurred. The system prompts you to stick to facts, not opinions. "Thabo arrived at 9:15am when his shift starts at 8:00am" rather than "Thabo doesn't care about being on time."

Phase 4: What did Thabo say? This is crucial. Every employee has the right to give their side. Maybe Thabo had a genuine reason. Maybe his taxi broke down. Maybe he has nothing to say. Whatever it is, you record it. This shows you gave him a fair hearing.

Phase 5: What's expected going forward? State clearly what you need from Thabo. "Arrive by 8:00am each scheduled shift" is clear and measurable. The system helps you be specific rather than vague.

Phase 6: What's the improvement plan? Thabo might commit to leaving home earlier or setting an alarm. You set a follow-up date—maybe two weeks—to check if things have improved. This shows the company is giving him a genuine chance to fix the issue.

Phase 7: Review everything Before any signatures, you see a summary of everything you've entered. Anything wrong? Go back and fix it. This is your last chance to correct mistakes.

Phase 8: The script Here's where File really helps. The system generates a script—exactly what to say to Thabo when you deliver the warning. You can choose from any of South Africa's 11 official languages.

You read this script aloud. It covers everything legally required: what he did wrong, what's expected, what happens if it continues, his right to appeal, his right to have representation. You don't have to memorise anything or worry about forgetting something important.

Phase 9: Signatures You sign first. Then Thabo sees the complete document—not just a summary, the actual PDF that will be filed. He knows exactly what he's signing. He signs. If a witness is present, they can sign too.

Everything is timestamped automatically. No one can later claim the signatures were forged or the document was changed.

Phase 10: Delivery Choose how Thabo gets his copy. Email it, send via WhatsApp, print it, or show him a QR code to scan. The document is automatically saved to his employee record.

That's it. You're done.

What Managers Actually Say

Managers who've used File consistently mention the same things:

"I stopped worrying about getting it wrong." The system ensures you can't skip important steps. If something required is missing, you simply can't proceed. This isn't frustrating—it's reassuring.

"The script is a lifesaver." Reading from a prepared script removes the awkwardness of finding the right words. The employee hears a professional, consistent message. You're not making it up as you go.

"I can do it right there in the moment." With File on your phone, you can address issues while they're fresh. No more waiting until you're back at your desk, trying to remember what happened.

"I know exactly where everything is." Need to see Thabo's warning history? It's there instantly. Need to show HR what you've issued? They can see it in the system. Need that document for a CCMA case in two years? It's safely stored.

What About Employees? How Do They React?

Most employees actually appreciate the structured process. Here's why:

It's fair. The system requires you to listen to their side. Many employees have never experienced that in a disciplinary situation. They feel heard, even if they don't like the outcome.

It's clear. They see exactly what's expected and what happens next. No ambiguity, no "I didn't understand."

It's in their language. If Thabo's first language is isiZulu, you can deliver the warning in isiZulu. He can't later claim he didn't understand.

It's documented. Employees often appreciate having proper records too. It protects them against arbitrary treatment.

The goal isn't to punish employees—it's to correct behaviour and give them a genuine chance to improve. File supports that goal.

Common Questions

"Do I need training?" Not really. The system is self-explanatory. Most managers issue their first warning successfully with zero training. But if your company wants a walkthrough, it takes about 30 minutes.

"What if I make a mistake while using it?" You can edit everything until the final signatures. Made a typo? Fix it. Described something incorrectly? Go back. The review phase exists specifically for catching errors.

"What if the employee refuses to sign?" That happens sometimes. The system handles it. You document that the employee refused to sign, note any witnesses, and the warning is still valid. The system guides you through this.

"What if I'm away from my desk?" File works on any device—phone, tablet, or computer. You can issue a warning from a factory floor, a construction site, or a retail shop. Anywhere you have internet connection.

"What if I select the wrong warning level?" The system recommends a level based on history and law, but you can override it. If you think the situation warrants a higher or lower level, you select that and briefly note why. The important thing is that your decision is documented.

What This Means for Your Day-to-Day

Using File doesn't change how you manage people. It changes how you document managing people.

You still have the conversations. You still make the judgment calls. You still build relationships with your team. File just ensures that when formal documentation is needed, it's done correctly.

Think of it as a safety net. You do your job. The system catches any procedural gaps.

The Time Investment

Issuing a warning with File takes about 15 minutes. That includes:

- Selecting the employee (1 minute)
- Choosing the category and reviewing the recommendation (2 minutes)
- Describing what happened (3 minutes)
- Recording the employee's response (2 minutes)
- Setting expectations and improvement plans (3 minutes)
- Reviewing and signing (3 minutes)
- Delivery (1 minute)

Compare that to hunting for templates, figuring out what to write, worrying about legal compliance, and hoping you haven't missed something. File takes less time and produces better results.

The Bottom Line

File doesn't require you to become an HR expert. It doesn't require hours of training. It doesn't require changing how you work with your team.

It simply ensures that when formal disciplinary action is needed, you can handle it confidently, correctly, and quickly.

You focus on the person. The system handles the process.

That's all there is to it.

File by FIFO — Because managing people shouldn't require a law degree.

Learn more at <https://file fifo.systems>