

Standard Operating Procedure

Progressive Discipline and Corrective Action

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Approved By:	Director of Human Resources

1. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure establishes a fair and consistent approach to addressing employee performance issues and policy violations through progressive disciplinary measures.

2. Philosophy

The company believes in providing employees with opportunities to improve their performance and correct behavioral issues. Progressive discipline is designed to be corrective rather than punitive, with the goal of helping employees succeed.

3. Progressive Discipline Steps

3.1 Step 1: Verbal Warning

- First occurrence of minor policy violation or performance issue
- Supervisor discusses concern with employee in private setting
- Supervisor documents conversation including date, issue discussed, and expected improvements
- Documentation filed in supervisor's records; not placed in official personnel file
- Employee given opportunity to explain circumstances
- Clear expectations and timeline for improvement established

3.2 Step 2: Written Warning

- Second occurrence or continued performance issues within 12 months
- Formal written documentation prepared by supervisor and reviewed by HR
- Meeting conducted with employee, supervisor, and HR representative
- Written warning includes:
 - Specific description of violation or performance deficiency
 - Reference to previous verbal warning
 - Expected standards and specific improvement plan

- Consequences of continued issues
- Timeline for improvement (typically 30-60 days)
- Employee signature required (signature indicates receipt, not agreement)
- Copy placed in employee's official personnel file

3.3 Step 3: Final Written Warning

- Third occurrence or failure to improve after written warning
- More serious policy violation that does not warrant immediate termination
- Meeting with employee, supervisor, HR representative, and department head
- Final written warning includes:
 - Complete history of performance issues and previous warnings
 - Detailed performance improvement plan with measurable goals
 - Explicit statement that failure to improve will result in termination
 - Typically 30-day improvement period with weekly check-ins
- Employee may be placed on probationary status
- Copy placed in personnel file; HR maintains active monitoring

3.4 Step 4: Termination

- Continued performance issues despite progressive discipline
- Serious policy violation warranting immediate termination
- Must be approved by department head and HR Director
- Termination meeting conducted by supervisor and HR representative
- All company property collected at time of termination
- Exit interview scheduled within 48 hours
- Final paycheck provided per state requirements

4. Issues Warranting Disciplinary Action

4.1 Attendance and Punctuality Issues

- Excessive tardiness (more than 3 instances in 30-day period)
- Unexcused absences
- Pattern of Monday/Friday absences
- Failure to properly notify supervisor of absences
- Leaving work early without authorization
- Extended lunch breaks without approval

4.2 Performance Deficiencies

- Failure to meet established productivity standards
- Repeated errors or poor quality work
- Inability to complete assigned tasks within reasonable timeframes
- Failure to follow established procedures and protocols
- Inadequate job knowledge after appropriate training period
- Lack of attention to detail resulting in errors

4.3 Policy Violations

- Violation of company dress code
- Unauthorized use of company equipment or resources

- Failure to follow safety procedures
- Inappropriate use of internet or email
- Excessive personal phone calls or texts during work hours
- Failure to submit required documentation (timesheets, reports, etc.)

4.4 Conduct Issues

- Unprofessional behavior or communication with colleagues or clients
- Failure to cooperate with team members
- Spreading rumors or gossip
- Insubordination or refusal to follow reasonable directives
- Creating conflict or hostile work environment
- Failure to maintain confidentiality

5. Serious Violations Warranting Immediate Termination

The following violations may result in immediate termination without progressive discipline:

- Theft or dishonesty, including falsification of company records
- Workplace violence or threats of violence
- Possession of weapons on company property
- Harassment or discrimination based on protected characteristics
- Substance abuse: working under influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Gross insubordination or refusal to perform job duties
- Breach of confidentiality or disclosure of proprietary information
- Fraud or embezzlement
- Intentional damage to company property
- Violation of safety rules creating serious risk to others
- Conviction of a crime that impacts job duties or company reputation

6. Documentation Requirements

- All disciplinary actions must be documented in writing
- Documentation should include:
 - Date, time, and location of incident or discussion
 - Detailed description of the issue or violation
 - Previous warnings or discussions on related issues
 - Expected standards and improvement plan
 - Employee's response or explanation
 - Consequences of continued issues
 - Signatures and dates
- HR must review all written and final warnings before delivery
- Copies of all warnings maintained in personnel file for duration of employment plus 7 years

7. Employee Rights During Disciplinary Process

- Right to be informed of specific performance issues or violations

- Opportunity to provide explanation or present mitigating circumstances
- Right to receive copy of all written documentation
- Ability to submit written response to be included in personnel file
- Right to have HR representative present during disciplinary meetings
- Protection from retaliation for raising concerns about disciplinary process

8. Manager Responsibilities

- Address performance and conduct issues promptly and consistently
- Consult with HR before initiating formal disciplinary action
- Maintain confidentiality throughout process
- Apply policies fairly and without discrimination
- Provide specific feedback and clear improvement expectations
- Document all discussions and actions thoroughly
- Follow up on improvement plans and provide ongoing feedback

9. HR Responsibilities

- Review all disciplinary documentation for consistency and legal compliance
- Participate in written warning and termination meetings
- Maintain accurate records in personnel files
- Ensure uniform application of policies across departments
- Provide guidance to managers on disciplinary procedures
- Conduct investigations when necessary
- Monitor patterns of disciplinary issues for systemic problems

10. Special Considerations

- Progressive discipline may be accelerated for more serious violations
- Previous disciplinary actions remain in effect for 12 months
- After 12 months of satisfactory performance, employee returns to clean slate
- Immediate termination cases require approval from HR Director or above
- All termination decisions reviewed for consistency with past practices
- Company reserves right to deviate from progressive discipline when circumstances warrant