

Guidance for Managers

Outline for Performance Issue Documentation/Conversation

The following outline is designed to provide you with a template for addressing performance issues with Employees.

1) **Identify the performance gap – desired versus actual.**

- (a) Reiterate the role and responsibilities of the job and the **expected standards of conduct and performance**, i.e., what the performance should be.

Example - Tardiness

“When you were hired for this position, you were informed that the work hours would be 8:30 – 4:00 and you accepted that obligation to do so.”

Example - Generic

“In your position as [title], it is your responsibility/duty to [describe expected performance]. Specifically, on [date], you were directed to [describe assignment].”

- (b) **Describe the actual performance** as precisely as you can (in concrete, measurable terms if possible), i.e., what the performance actually is. Don't be vague – use facts. Be specific, give examples. Often it helps to use visuals to explain the performance gap and related facts. For example, when discussing attendance problems, showing a printout of the employee's attendance history with the absences highlighted has a dramatic effect (your HR/Payroll office can provide you with this upon request) The employee is less doubting and confrontational when the performance issue is presented clearly and factually instead of using a generic characterization of behavior – ie: “You are never on time”.

Example - Tardiness

“However, in this past week you have been more than 20 minutes late and failed to call your supervisor as required, on the following date(s)... This is not acceptable.”

Example - Generic

“However, it has been brought to my attention that on [date], you [describe actual performance].” This is not acceptable.”

2) **Identify the business reasons for the desired change and the impact of the performance issue on your program or day-to day operations.**

- (a) Describe the **behavior that must occur** and **the business reason(s) why** and the **impact of the actual behavior** to the program.

Example - Tardiness

“As a receptionist for this office, it is necessary that you be present during our business hours to assist our customers. Our customers will not be well served if there is no one there to greet and assist them.”

Example - Generic

“As a [title] in this program, it is necessary that you [describe assignment] as assigned. Our customers are dependent upon you promptly and correctly doing so. Your failure to do so resulted in [describe impact of performance issue].”

3) **Identify the consequences to the employee of not changing the behavior and the actions you will take.**

- (a) State the **obligation of the employee to correct** the situation. You have an obligation to inform the employee of **action(s) that will be taken by management** or you as their supervisor if the behavior does not change. Be clear about the consequences, including appropriate disciplinary action, if changes are not made.

Example - Tardiness

“This is a formal counseling. You must correct this attendance problem immediately. If you fail to do so, we will have to take appropriate disciplinary action.”

Example - Generic

“As such, you are hereby issued an oral reprimand. You are to complete the assignments as assigned and as discussed. Should you fail to do so, we will proceed with progressive disciplinary action.”

4) **Define an action plan.**

Before you have the conversation with the employee, develop a plan to present to the employee that includes a **time frame for improvement** and a date for the **next review**. Be certain that the behavior you are identifying can be changed. An **action plan** should document and include:

- (a) What the employee will do to improve. Identify specific, measurable, achievable and relevant goals.
- (b) A time frame for improvement and next meeting to review progress
- (c) Support to be given to the employee, if necessary, such as training or EAP services.

Example - Tardiness

“Effective immediately, you are directed to report to work at your scheduled start time of 8:30 a.m. If you must be absent due to illness or emergency, you must call into your supervisor no later than 20 minutes before your scheduled starting

time. We will meet again in 1 month to review your attendance. IF there is a personal situation that is causing this problem, the EAP is there to provide you with assistance.”

Example - Generic

“You are directed to [describe assignment]. We will meet every 2 weeks until these assignments are completed to review your progress on these assigned tasks. If you are unable to complete them, you are to notify me immediately, in advance of the established due date, and indicate what cannot be completed and why it cannot be completed.”

5) Check for Understanding.

Before the end of the meeting, have the employee acknowledge that they heard and understand what the desired behavior should be; why it is important to the organization; and understand that should the behavior not change, (further) disciplinary action may be taken. The employee need not agree with your statements, they need only acknowledge that they understand what is expected of them and the possible consequences if the behavior does not change.

6) Remember the Purpose of Discipline.

The purpose of discipline is to correct behavior and to improve employee performance. The purpose of disciplinary action is NOT punishment. Our goal is to use the disciplinary process to correct inappropriate behaviors and to improve employee performance to make the delivery of services for your program more efficient and effective.

7) Who Has the Conversation With the Employee?

Formal Counseling and Oral Reprimands are routinely handled by immediate supervisors without the presence of Human Resources. HR is available to advise, guide and be present if necessary but supervisors have, and should exercise this authority in necessary instances. Doing so directly with an employee at these levels, reinforces supervisory authority and the supervisor/subordinate relationship.

Written reprimands are drafted and signed by the HR Administrator and delivered to the employee by the supervisor. An HR representative can be present for this conversation if requested and if circumstances warrant.

Should the behavior warrant more severe disciplinary action (suspension/termination), Human Resources will work with supervisors to gather facts and conduct an investigation. Suspensions and termination may only be taken by an Appointing Authority (HR Administrator).