

29. Progressive Discipline

The Progressive Disciplinary Procedure has been developed to ensure fair response in the event of violation of the Society's Code of Conduct or policies and procedures. These guidelines are not designed to restrict the employee, but rather to assure equal treatment and protect the rights of all employees. When an employee receives any disciplinary action, the employee is entitled to know the full reasons for the Society initiating such action, and is entitled to fairness and consistency in such matters.

The concept behind progressive discipline is to help the employee to understand performance expectations and correct the behaviour that is unacceptable through a graduated range of formal feedback responses.

Initially, the supervisor works with the employee to try and resolve the problem without imposing a severe penalty. If the behaviour is not corrected, the penalty will increase in proportion to the seriousness of the offence. **It is important to note that the circumstances surrounding the incident will determine the level at which the process will begin.**

All disciplinary actions will be fully documented, stating the area(s) of job performance that are unsatisfactory and including time lines for improvement. One copy signed by the employee and his/her supervisor will be placed in the employee's file and one copy will be given to the employee.

Time Frame for Removal of Verbal and Written Warnings from File

Because the purpose of progressive discipline is to help the employee correct inappropriate actions in a timely fashion, and to ensure quality service to the people we support, there must be active management of the process. Clear timelines for review of the employee's performance must be established when progressive discipline steps are taken. If, after two years, there has been no re-occurrence of the action that caused a disciplinary action, the verbal warnings and written warnings can be removed from an employee's personnel file. Written documentation of suspensions will not be removed from the file.

(a) Definitions of discipline

VERBAL WARNING

Verbal warnings are warranted when the misconduct is too severe to be dealt with through corrective counselling or where corrective counselling has failed to bring about the desired change in behaviour. A verbal warning is given in private, must include time lines for improvement, must be fully documented, and a copy given to the employee. This copy **does not** represent a written reprimand.

WRITTEN REPRIMAND

When the misconduct is of a more serious nature or when the verbal warning was ineffective, a written reprimand is usually appropriate. The letter will include the

incidents which gave rise to the letter, a review of the relevant policies or procedures or responsibilities the employee failed to meet, an explanation of why the behaviours/actions are unacceptable, a statement of what is expected of the employee and time lines for improvement, and the consequences which will follow if those expectations are not met. **Any letters of reprimand must first be reviewed and approved by HR.**

SUSPENSION

If previous disciplinary measures have failed or the misconduct is very serious, a suspension may be appropriate. The employee will be informed in person and by letter of the term of the suspension. The letter will clearly indicate the following: a major problem exists; past corrective measures have failed and satisfactory improvement has not occurred; the length of the suspension and the dates it will be served; the expectations of future behaviour after the suspension is served; and the consequences which will follow if those expectations are not met. **The Executive Director must be involved in any decision to suspend an employee.**

TERMINATION

Termination is the final and most severe step in progressive discipline. The supervisor must be able to establish that the employee has no rehabilitative potential left or that the offence was so severe that the employment relationship is irreparably damaged. **The Executive Director must approve any decision to terminate employment.**