

Purpose

Our progressive discipline policy and procedure is designed to provide a structured corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence of undesirable behavior and/or performance issues. It has been designed consistent with our organizational values, HR best practices and employment laws.

Outlined below are the steps of our progressive discipline policy and procedure. The City of Mulberry reserves the right to combine or skip steps depending upon facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. The level of disciplinary intervention may also vary. Some of the factors that will be considered depend upon whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling and/or training, the employee's work record and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on our organization.

Procedure

Step 1: Counseling and Verbal Warning

Step 1 creates an opportunity for the immediate supervisor to schedule a meeting with an employee to bring attention to the existing performance, conduct or attendance issue. The supervisor should discuss with the employee the nature of the problem or violation of the City's policies and procedures. The supervisor is expected to clearly outline expectations and steps the employee must take to improve performance or resolve the problem.

Within five business days, the supervisor will prepare written documentation of a step 1 meeting. The employee will be asked to sign this document. The employee's signature is needed to demonstrate the employee's understanding of the issues and corrective action needed.

Step 2: Written Warning

While it is hoped that the performance, conduct or attendance issues that were identified in step 1 have been corrected, The City of Mulberry recognizes that this may not always be the case. A written warning involves a more formal documentation of the performance, conduct or attendance issues and consequences.

During step 2, the immediate supervisor and a division manager or director will meet with the employee and review any additional incidents or information about the performance, conduct or attendance issues as well as any prior relevant corrective action plans. Management will outline the consequences for the employee of his or her continued failure to meet performance and/or conduct expectations. A formal performance improvement plan (PIP) requiring the employee's immediate and sustained corrective action will be issued within five business days of a step 2 meeting. A warning outlining that the employee may be subject to additional discipline up to and including termination if immediate and sustained corrective action is not taken may also be included in the written warning.

Step 3: Suspension and Final Written Warning

There may be performance, conduct or safety incidents so problematic and harmful that the most effective action may be the temporary removal of the employee from the workplace. When

immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of the employee or others, the immediate supervisor may suspend the employee pending the results of an investigation.

Suspensions that are recommended as part of the normal progression of this progressive discipline policy and procedure are subject to approval from a next-level manager and HR.

Depending upon the seriousness of the infraction, the employee may be suspended without pay in full-day increments consistent with federal, state and local wage-and-hour employment laws. Nonexempt/hourly employees may not substitute or use an accrued paid vacation or sick day in lieu of the unpaid suspension. Due to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) compliance issues, unpaid suspension of salaried/exempt employees is reserved for serious workplace safety or conduct issues. HR will provide guidance so that the discipline is administered without jeopardizing the FLSA exemption status.

Pay may be restored to the employee if an investigation of the incident or infraction absolves the employee.

Step 4: Recommendation for Termination of Employment

The last and most serious step in the progressive discipline procedure is a recommendation to terminate employment. Generally, The City of Mulberry will try to exercise the progressive nature of this policy by first providing warnings, final written warning and/or suspension from the workplace before proceeding to a recommendation to terminate employment. However, the City of Mulberry reserves the right to combine and skip steps depending upon the circumstances of each situation and the nature of the offense. Furthermore, employees may be terminated without prior notice or disciplinary action.

Management's recommendation to terminate employment must be approved by the City Manager and HR.

Nothing in this policy provides any contractual rights regarding employee discipline or counseling nor should anything in this policy be read or construed as modifying or altering the employment-at-will relationship between the City of Mulberry and its employees.

Appeal Process

Employees will have the opportunity to present information that may challenge information management has used to issue disciplinary action. The purpose of this process is to provide insight into extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the employee performance and/or conduct issues while allowing for an equitable solution.

If the employee does not present this information during any of the step meetings, he or she will have five business days after that meeting to present information.

Performance and Conduct Issues Not Subject to Progressive Discipline

Behavior that is illegal is not subject to progressive discipline and may be reported to local law enforcement. Theft, intoxication at work, fighting and other acts of violence are also not subject to progressive discipline and may be grounds for immediate termination.

Documentation

The employee will be provided copies of all progressive discipline documentation, including all performance improvement plans. The employee will be asked to sign copies of this documentation attesting to their receipt and understanding of the corrective action outlined in these documents. Copies of these documents will be placed in the employee's official personnel file.

