

MANAGER TRAINING

The Disciplinary Process

One of the most difficult tasks a manager faces is when an employee needs to be disciplined for violating company policy. Managers may feel that they are not suited or capable of undertaking the task.

Discipline is not about wanting to terminate an employee. Discipline is simply about letting the employee know that he/she has violated company policy and informing the employee what he/she can do to correct the behavior in the future. Setting employees up for success, not failure, is a major part of the disciplinary process.



Managers who fail to discipline their employees in a timely manner or look the other way are not managing the workforce in a proactive manner.

In order to properly navigate the disciplinary process, managers should:

- Take steps to make sure the employees you manage are familiar with the company's policies. Have rules and guidelines in place that enable the employees you manage to follow company policy. Set expectations from day one. This will set the employee up for success.
- Apply your company's policies consistently and equally to all employees. Do not let your feelings get in the way. Be fair but firm.
- Document policy violations based on facts. Do not include opinions or emotions in written documentation. Hold employees accountable every time they violate a company policy. Progressive discipline will assist management in making a decision when considering termination.
- Provide employees with the opportunity to explain their side of the story. Take all facts into consideration.
- Establish a climate of communication that allows for employees to be heard in a positive and respectful manner.

It is important to note that disciplinary action for excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness may be caused by a situation that may be covered by FMLA, USERRA or medical, family, school or voting laws.

How easy would a manager's job be if he or she did not have to have difficult conversations with employees? When faced with difficult conversations, managers who treat employees with respect, lead by example, follow policies, and engage in consistent disciplinary practices are not only setting themselves up for success, but also the employees they manage.