

Dealing with Performance Issues - HR toolkit

1. Applying progressive discipline

- Progressive discipline is used to increase the employee's awareness of a problem and the expectation of improvement based on an escalation of consequences for failure to comply. Consequences may include the following steps:
 - Step 1: Verbal warning
 - Step 2: Written warning
 - Step 3: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
 - Step 4: Suspension
 - Step 5: Termination
- Depending on the nature of the misconduct and other factors, the appropriate step to initiate may vary. Read more about the steps involved in progressive discipline.
- This guide will help to determine the appropriate step to start your progressive discipline.

2. Initiating a performance improvement plan

- A performance improvement plan is a tool used to give an employee with performance issues the opportunity to succeed. It could be used to address failures to meet specific goals imperative for their role, or to improve behavior-related concerns.
- Preparing an Employee Performance Improvement Plan form which clearly states:
 - The expectations of the workplace, a description of acceptable conduct, and/or performance required for future success in the role.
 - The consequences of failing to meet expectations.
 - The method for how improvement will be measured.
 - Any follow-up meetings and progress reports.
 - The length of time the employee will be considered under review.
- Meeting with the employee to review their plan in detail and answer any questions.
- Documenting the discussion objectively and keeping a copy with the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) in the employee's file will provide important context for future discussions.
- Scheduling regular meetings to monitor progress with the PIP and provide support as necessary will help support an employee's success.

[ORGANIZATION LOGO]

Written warning letter

Enter date

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Enter employee name

Enter employee address

Re: Written Warning

Dear [Employee name],

This letter is to confirm what was discussed on [enter date] regarding your [conduct/performance] as a [position] at [organization]. This is your [first/second] warning letter.

On [date], you met with [supervisor name] and [HR manager name]. At this meeting, you were advised that your [job performance/work conduct] was [unsatisfactory/gravely concerning] and that you were required to improve your performance immediately. Specifically, we discussed [outline thematic concerns, such as lack of professionalism, absenteeism, initiative, poor judgement, inappropriate behaviour, etc. Include examples of specific incidents of problematic behaviour to support claims]. Continued poor performance threatens the [reputation, morale, integrity, safety, etc.] of [the organization, clients, fellow colleagues and co-workers].

Over the past [length of time], our concerns regarding your conduct have been identified and discussed [identify specific dates and times when these issues were brought to the employee's attention]. Committed to seeing you succeed in your role, [organization] has [outline the various supports provided or offered to the employee to help them overcome and address their performance issues].

NOTE: Please include this form in the employee's CONFIDENTIAL personnel file along with any supporting documentation.

[ORGANIZATION LOGO]

If this is the first written warning: There will be a [number of weeks] trial period during which you will be required to improve your performance by [insert steps required to correct performance]. If there are no significant performance improvements by [insert end date of trial period], further disciplinary action may be taken.

If this is not the first written warning: Unfortunately, to date [describe what has been the result of these conversations and next interventions, e.g. suspension or termination].

It is critical that you begin to address the concerns brought forward. As a [position], [organization] relies on you to provide [describe the qualities required in their role, such as leadership, professionalism, good judgement etc.]. [Outline the expectations of the employee's role].

You are a valued employee and colleague at [organization]. It is our sincere hope that with our support you are able to make the necessary adjustments to be successful in your role. If, however, these behaviours continue in any way, it will result in further discipline, up to and including termination.

Sincerely,

[Supervisor Signature]

Date

[HR Manager Signature]

Date

Acknowledgement of Receipt:

I acknowledge that I have received this written reprimand. My acknowledgment does not mean that I agree with its contents. I understand that a copy of this letter will be placed in my official personnel file. I also acknowledge that I have the right to prepare a written response that will be attached to this original letter of warning and placed in my official personnel file.

[Employee Signature]

Date

CC. Employee file

NOTE: Please include this form in the employee's CONFIDENTIAL personnel file along with any supporting documentation.

Employee performance improvement plan forms - samples

Employee: _____

Date of review: _____

SECTION 1: PERFORMANCE REVIEW						
MAJOR TASKS (from job description)	ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE					COMMENTS (include feedback to support 1 and 4 ratings)
	n/a	1	2	3	4	
Coordinates patient care through the clinic – waiting room, prep procedures, exam room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Answers enquiries by phone and in person in a helpful, respectful, and efficient manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Maintains appointment schedule and manages recalls.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Maintains EMR efficiently, accurately and in accordance with company policy. This includes maintaining the patient chart.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensures exam rooms are stocked appropriately and ensures that they are ready for next patient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensures patient confidentiality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cleans and sterilizes materials and instruments following company policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Performs patient prep procedures and documents findings on the patient record	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Performs billing procedures for multiple payers (MSP, ICBC, WCB, RCMP, etc.) and applies and collects non-insured fees where applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE REVIEW

PERFORMANCE RATINGS

n/a - not applicable | 1 - needs development | 2 - satisfactory | 3 - above average | 4 - outstanding

Skills	n/a	1	2	3	4	Skills	n/a	1	2	3	4
Work quality (including accuracy).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Solves problems effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Work volume.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrates cost awareness (i.e., efficient use of medical and office supplies).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates community health perspective that aligns with the clinic purpose and goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrates good judgment and decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates well with other staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shows initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicates well with patients and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective writing skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Understands when to refer questions to a doctor or others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, the employee is a team player.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Employer comments – include feedback to support 1 and 4 ratings.											
Employees – use this space to provide feedback on how the employer can support you in improving your performance.											

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

Employee: _____ Date: _____

SECTION 3: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

For period _____ to _____.

Employee Goals (5 year outlook):

Employee Education Plan (2 year outlook):

Employee Development Plan (what experience would you like to gain in the next 2 years?):

Approval

Employee Signature

Date

HR Director Signature

Determining Disciplinary Requirements

Consider multiple factors when determining the appropriate step to start your progressive discipline. Several factors are involved in determining on what step you can start your progressive discipline. These factors are as follows, but not limited to:

Past record

Is the unacceptable conduct and/or performance consistent or inconsistent with past conduct and/or performance of the employee?

Length of service

How long has the employee been with the organization?

Intent

Did the employee act with willfulness or intent, or was the unacceptable conduct and/or performance due to carelessness or inattention?

Frequency

How many times has the unacceptable conduct and/or performance occurred?

Timeframe

Has the unacceptable conduct and/or performance occurred frequently in a relatively short period of time?

Repetition

Has a similar or the same unacceptable conduct and/or performance happened before? How long ago was the previous occurrence? Previous incidents may become less relevant to new discipline as time has passed and the unacceptable conduct and/or performance issues have not reoccurred.

Seriousness

How serious is the unacceptable conduct and/or performance, and has it had a negative impact on the organization and/or other employees? In cases of very serious misconduct, termination of employment might be the most appropriate course of action even if the employee has a clean disciplinary record.

Treatment of others

How have other employees been treated for the same or similar unacceptable conduct and/or performance? If the employee or other employees engaged in similar conduct in the past without discipline being imposed, then it may be difficult to justify discipline for the same conduct. In this case, the employee might have to be put on notice that the conduct is unacceptable, before more serious discipline can be imposed.

Provocation

Was the employee provoked by the actions of another individual(s)?

Knowledge

Was the employee aware that their conduct was unacceptable, or the level of performance expected of them?

Recognition of error and apology

Has the employee admitted to the unacceptable conduct and/or performance and apologized or attempted to rectify the issue?

Review all facts gathered from questions above as they relate to the specific questions to help determine the level of disciplinary action required.

Progressive Discipline Process

1. VERBAL WARNING

Verbal warnings are used for minor unacceptable conduct and/or performance.

- Discuss the unacceptable conduct and/or performance with the employee, so that they understand the expected standards of performance, reason for warning, any remedial action they are required to take as a result of their actions, and consequences if unacceptable conduct and/or performance continues.
- Objectively document the discussion that occurred and place the notes in the employee's personnel file.
- Follow-up any verbal warning with an email to record what was discussed and the need for a change in behavior. Use the email chain to document the discussion and save in the employee's file.

2. WRITTEN WARNING

Written warnings are used for repeat of minor unacceptable conduct and/or performance after verbal warning, or for conduct and/or performance which is more serious in nature.

- Complete a [Written Warning Letter](#) outlining the details of the infraction. Describe the unacceptable conduct and/or performance to ensure the employee understands the expected standards of performance, reason for warning, any remedial action they are required to take as a result of their actions, and consequences if unacceptable conduct and/or performance continues.
- Review the content of the [Written Warning Letter](#) with the employee.
- Objectively document the discussion that occurred and save the notes, along with a copy of the written warning, in the employee's personnel file.
- Consider having a neutral third-party present at the meeting when presenting an employee with any kind of disciplinary action.
- Sometimes to accompany a written warning, workplaces will create a Performance Improvement Plan for the employee. See section on [Performance Improvement Plans](#).

3. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

- Use an [employee improvement plan](#) to provide clear direction and support on how to improve performance.

4. SUSPENSION

- In rare circumstances, suspension may be used during an investigation, especially if the investigation involves a sensitive matter (e.g., an allegation of sexual harassment).
- The employee must be notified of the reason for the suspension and its expected duration. This must be objectively documented and a copy of the notice must be included in the employee's personnel file.
- Suspension may be a period of paid or unpaid leave. Suspensions during investigations will be paid except in rare circumstances.
- Consult a lawyer and/or human resources professional before proceeding with a possible suspension.
- Consider seeking legal advice if considering paid or unpaid suspensions and, in particular, if an investigation process is required.

5. TERMINATION

- This means ending employment of the employee. There are a number of factors to keep in mind when terminating an employee for cause or other reasons. See the termination section of this toolkit for important information you need to know when considering the termination of an employee.