

**Club Resources**  
INTERNATIONAL

**Employee Development  
and Disciplinary Guides**

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### Introduction

#### **Purpose of this Manual**

The key to meeting our responsibilities to owners and members alike is the committed involvement of our staff. This commitment flows naturally from people who are valued as individuals, properly trained, highly motivated, and well led. As a group of people committed to common goals, we can only achieve our highest potential if we take advantage of the talent, initiative, and ingenuity of each and every one of our employees.

Each department is the sum of its parts. To the extent that any individual is not valued, trained, and motivated, the department suffers. When the department suffers, the club suffers. Like a chain, we are only as strong as our weakest link. Further, it is the continual application of the oil of leadership applied by supervisors which permits departments and the club to function smoothly and efficiently.

This manual spells out how supervisors can ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the club by developing their employees to their fullest potential.

#### **Supervisors' Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that each employee is developed to his fullest potential and that he is trained in all aspects of his job. Because clubs are complex and their operation involves thousands of details, there is much for new employees to learn.

From the club's perspective, the desired outcome of any hiring process is to hire and train good people who will make a positive contribution to the success of the organization. As supervisors of the club, we have a vested interest in any new hire's success. We want him to succeed. We want him to help us succeed. The surest way for us to guarantee his success is to create the environment and programs to ensure the fullest development of his potential.

This development of the abilities and skills of a new employee is an ongoing process requiring the continual interest and active participation of supervisors.

### Employee Development

#### **Supervisor's Staff Notes**

One of the most important things a supervisor can do to ensure meaningful employee development is to keep daily or weekly notes on the attitude, performance, and conduct of all members of his department. Staff Notes serve as a detailed and factual basis for informal discussions of an employee's performance and progress, for detailing specifics during performance reviews, and as backup and support for counseling and/or disciplinary actions.

All supervisors should keep a small notebook for this purpose. The few minutes a day that it takes to record events, errors of omission and commission, attitude problems, superlative performance of duties, and

conversations with or instructions to individual employees will pay immense dividends in the development of the department as a whole. Such records allow you to identify and recognize outstanding staff, to terminate the problem employee without difficulty, and to develop each employee to his fullest potential through meaningful feedback.

### Hiring Process

A supervisor's first responsibility is to hire properly. Different positions in the club require different personalities. Cart staff, starters and rangers, dining room wait staff or bartenders, by nature of their positions, require a naturally friendly, outgoing, upbeat personality. These traits are not easily taught someone who does not have them. It is important, therefore, to carefully consider the type person you want to hire and look for those traits at an interview. You might even want to bring another person into the interview to see how the introductions and small talk go. If the applicant is shy, retiring, and uncommunicative, you can bet they would not make a good cart attendant.

A second major requirement of supervisors during the hiring process is a careful review of the individual's application or resume. Prepare yourself to ask the following sorts of questions:

- Has the applicant moved from job to job frequently? If so, why?
- Does he list previous supervisors and give phone numbers where they can be contacted?
- Does he have pertinent experience? How much? In what kind of establishments?
- What is the applicant looking for at your club? Why does he want to work here?

Let the applicant talk about what he did in each position, what he learned, what he liked, what he didn't like.

Explain the job requirements in detail to the applicant. Let him know the hours, the rate of pay, the possibility of rotating shifts, your own perception of the positive and negative aspects of the job, the challenges facing the department, your goals and plans for the department.

Try to let the applicant know as much as possible about the position he's getting into to ensure that he doesn't come back later and say he's leaving because he didn't expect this or that. Tell him what kind of a boss you are and what you will expect of him. Encourage the applicant to ask questions about the position, the club, the department, and you as his immediate supervisor. Often, you can gain a better understanding of what the applicant is seeking by the questions he asks.

It is also common courtesy to inform him if there are other applicants and when you expect to make the hiring decision. Promise to let him know one way or the other about the hiring. If he has gone to the trouble of filling out an application and coming for an interview, you owe him the courtesy of an answer, even if it's a no.

Remember that an outsider's impressions of the club come from how he is treated in all his dealings with us. Simply because someone is applying for work here does not exclude him, his family, or friends from being a guest or even a member of the club. If he has been treated with courtesy in all his dealings with us, he will have an immediate good feeling for us and that good feeling will be communicated to others in the surrounding community.

Checking references is probably the most critical aspect of the hiring process. If an applicant doesn't make it easy for you to check references by providing you names and current phone numbers, he may have something to hide. Make the effort to call each reference.

Ask pertinent questions, such as:

- How long did he work for you? In what position? At what rate of pay? Do these answers agree with information on the application? If not, question the applicant on the discrepancies.
- Why did he leave your employ?
- How did he get along with fellow staff?
- Was he good in his dealings with members, guests, or the general public?
- Was he prompt, reliable, honest, sober, hardworking, etc.?
- Did he handle money correctly and without problems?
- Would you rehire?

If a reference is unwilling to provide a reference because of their company policy, simply verify position held, dates of employment, rate of pay, and ask if he would rehire the individual.

Some supervisors claim to be excellent judges of character from a five-minute interview and don't bother to call references. These supervisors take a major chance with every hire, have greater turnover, and more staff problems. While you may see yourself as an excellent judge of character – to the smooth-talking, dishonest applicant, you're just another fool to con.

All of the above may seem like a lot of effort to hire a housekeeper, a cart attendant, a waiter, or a dishwasher. But the modest amount of time spent in properly screening applicants and checking references before hiring, can save a tremendous amount of time and effort involved in higher turnover and training someone new because the last person didn't work out.

Because management and supervisory hires have a much greater impact on the success of the club, much greater pains should be taken to ensure the right hire. The information provided in Disciplined Hiring provides in depth information of efforts to hire the right people for these critical positions.

### **Equal Opportunity**

Clubs must be committed to equal opportunity in employment. Therefore, it is club policy to recruit, hire, train, evaluate, promote and administer any and all personnel actions without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, pregnancy disability, medical condition, physical or mental handicap, or other protected status. The only criteria of concern to us in hiring, assignment, promotion decisions, and other personnel related matters, are the qualifications, skills, and capabilities of the individuals involved.

### **Hiring**

Vacant positions should be filled as necessity and the demands of business require, but a new position should not be created without first having the General Manager's approval for the position.

The Club's Personnel Administrator has certain documentary requirements for any new hire:

- A properly completed application form.
- A Personnel Data Sheet (PDS), CRI Form 104, indicating the position for which hired, the start date, the rate of pay, position status (Regular Full, Part Time, or Seasonal), the number of hours to be worked per

week, and the new hire's name, address, and social security number. Because of the importance of ensuring the new hire's understanding of his rate of pay, status, and number of hours, he must sign the PDS.

Supervisors may not start working a new hire without turning in a PDS to the Personnel Administrator.

- Proof of citizenship or right to work in the United States.
- Completion of Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate (W-4 and State-4 form).

### **New Hire Orientations**

As mentioned before, each person's perception of the club is dependent upon his initial experiences in the hiring and onboarding process. If a new employee is treated with courtesy and respect and is impressed by the efforts being made to make him feel welcome and comfortable in his new surroundings, his attitudes about his place of employment will be good from the beginning. If not, he can just as easily develop negative attitudes about the club.

Being in new surroundings, meeting new people, and being exposed to an unfamiliar place and position creates anxiety. Try to remember your first day on any of your prior jobs. It is up to all at the club to do everything they can to put the new hire at ease, make him feel welcome, and ensure he gets off to a good start. While this is primarily the responsibility of supervisors, every employee should be encouraged to help the new hire.

Supervisors will schedule an appointment for a Club Orientation from the Personnel Administrator for all new staff as soon after hiring as possible. If time permits, it should be done when the new hire is filling out his hiring documents. Because it takes about an hour to properly orient a new hire, supervisors must closely coordinate each new hire's processing with the Personnel Administrator.

The new hire orientation is designed to provide new staff with important information, including:

- Issue of Employee Handbook, making special mention of:
  - Introductory period.
  - Paydays, timekeeping procedures, applicable benefits.
  - Club rules and regulations.
  - Employee meal policy.
  - Where to park personal cars.
  - Schedules, attendance, notification of absence.
  - Proper use of sick/emergency days.
  - Explanation of performance reviews and pay reviews.
- Issue employee timekeeping badge or timecard.

The Personnel Administrator will complete a Facility Orientation Checklist, CRI Form 105, for each new hire, indicating that all of the above topics were covered. The completed checklist will be placed in and become a part of the new hire's personnel record.

Once all in-processing and the Club Orientation have been given, Supervisors will take new hires to their departments. Supervisors will give the new hire a departmental orientation to include:

- Departmental policies, rules, and regulations.
- Uniform or dress requirements.

- Schedule and hours.
- Use of time clock.
- Issue of job description.
- Reiteration of timely attendance and notification of absence.
- Reiteration of introductory period and introductory period review.
- Discussion of training program.
- Issue of uniforms, if appropriate.
- Introduction to other departmental staff.
- Tour of departmental work areas.
- Familiarization tour of property.
- Introduction to key club staff.
- When to report for training.

The supervisor will complete a Departmental Orientation Checklist, CRI Form 106, for each new hire, indicating that all of the above items were covered. The completed checklist will be signed by the supervisor and forwarded to the Personnel Administrator for inclusion in the new hire's personnel file.

At least once a month, the Personnel Administrator will schedule a General Manager's Welcome for all new hires. The Personnel Administrator is responsible for setting these sessions up and notifying all new hires and management of the meeting.

This two level orientation process is designed to ensure that all new hires are made to feel welcome, completely understand all aspects of working at the club, what is expected of them, and how we intend to prepare them to do their jobs properly.

### **Job Descriptions**

Job descriptions describe the principal duties of a position. Employees should not be expected to work at the club without written descriptions of their duties. It is a supervisor's responsibility to establish written job descriptions for each position in his department and to keep them current.

All job descriptions should contain the following information:

- Job title
- Department
- Reports to, i.e. Supervisor's title
- Concise statements of position's principal duties.

Well thought out and written job descriptions are important part in the overall training and development of a new employee.

### **Performance Standards**

Performance standards are the next logical step after informing an employee what he must do and tell him how he must do it. Performance standards are stated levels of the quality and quantity of work that supervisors expect of their staffs.

Establishing meaningful performance standards is one of the more difficult things a supervisor is called upon to do, but is made easier by good job descriptions that accurately describe the primary functions of each position and the development of written standards, policies, and procedures for each department. There are certain standards that pertain to all positions (e.g., standards of courtesy in dealing with members and guests), but most are specific to a particular department and position.

While putting standards into writing requires concentration and focus, they must exist in the supervisor's head in some form or he would never be able to explain to his staff what he expects of them. The easiest way to write performance standards is to take each primary function from a position's job description and describe how you want that function performed and what the desired outcome is for each member interaction.

### **Daily Work Checklists**

Daily work checklists are important tools for supervisors to ensure that critical items are accomplished daily or by each shift and to establish accountability for those items. They should be completed daily by each assigned employee/shift and turned back in to the supervisor. To avoid the checklist becoming a meaningless exercise, supervisors must periodically spot check items on the checklist.

### **Initial Training**

Initial training consists of the formal training program, designed for each separate position that imparts the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully meet the requirements of that position.

The depth and quality of training programs is a major factor in determining the quality of the club's operation. Without proper training, a club has problems in attracting and retaining good employees, has high turnover and low morale, lacks consistency in product and services, and is constantly consumed by crises and chaos.

While many supervisors find it difficult to devote the time, resources, and money to proper training, they miss the forest for the trees. When a club has a well-trained staff, more problems are avoided, the quality and quantity of work is higher, problems are solved more easily at lower levels, member complaints decrease, and time spent to correct errors decreases. Further, supervisors and management have more time for planning, organizational improvement, problem solving, and taking advantage of opportunities.

A prevalent method of training in the hospitality industry is called "trailing." This takes place when the new employee follows a long-term employee around. The idea is that the new employee will learn all the right things from the old employee. This, of course, assumes that the old employee was properly trained, knows what he is doing, is honest, is conscientious, and so forth.

While there is nothing wrong with appointing individual employees as departmental trainers, they should be selected on the basis of their knowledge, teaching ability, patience, conscientiousness, and quality of their work. Still, the trainer must have a well-organized, thoughtfully-prepared training program to ensure that the necessary information is passed on to each new hire in a thorough and consistent manner.

Establishing what skills and knowledge are necessary for each position is easy if the supervisor has spent the time to create good job descriptions. For instance, if one of the principal duties of a cart attendant is to welcome

golfers to the club and assist them with their cart, then the trainee needs to know how to greet a member or guest, how to help them with their bag, how to instruct them on the use of the cart, what pertinent course information such as course distances are measured to the center of the greens, how to show them the pin placement sheet, how to answer any questions about club events and services, etc.

Formal training should be conducted in frequent, small blocks of time and material. Do not expect a new hire to grasp the multitude of details and instructions received in the first few days of training. Plan for appropriate breaks and intersperse classroom instruction with tours and demonstrations.

The best way to teach someone a new skill is to place him in a quiet, undistracted setting, tell him how to do it, show him how to do it, allow him to do it, and constructively critique his effort. Not everyone has the same comprehension skill and new hires may be nervous in new surroundings. It may require several training sessions to teach a particular skill.

Document each new hire's training progress. Supervisors should develop a list of the competencies that must be mastered for each position. As the new hire learns each competency, note the fact on his training checklist. This checklist should be included in the employee's personnel or departmental file.

Supervisors should not assume that others will do the necessary training of their department's new hires. While Personnel Administrator has certain orientation responsibilities, it is ultimately the department head's responsibility to ensure that employees are properly trained.

### **Ongoing Training**

There is so much information and detail for new hires to absorb that it is impossible for them to grasp it all. Therefore, training must be viewed as an ongoing process. Supervisors should make the effort within the first few months of a new employee's employment to observe his work, ask him questions, and meet periodically with him to assess and critique his work. These sessions will help the supervisor determine what areas need further training or reinforcement.

While informal work reviews and day-to-day instruction constitute the major part of a supervisor's ongoing training of new staff, it is also helpful to hold periodic formal refresher training. This continuing training is beneficial not only to new employees, but also makes good review for long-term staff. Any formal refresher training should be noted in each individual employee's training file.

Another helpful training technique is to identify some important detail of your department's operation and have your entire staff focus on it for a month. For instance, if the Dining Room Manager has a concern about speed of service, hold a special training class for waiters and place special emphasis on this one item. During the following month, focus on some other aspect – say selling appetizers. Even when the staff moves on to this new area of focus, they will not forget the importance of getting food to the tables quickly.

### **Performance Reviews**

Every person wants and deserves to know how he is doing. This is particularly important for new hires. It is important for the club to determine if the new hire will meet the standards of conduct and work performance, and it's important for the new hire to know where he stands and what improvement is necessary.

Periodic performance reviews should be a part of every employee's work experience at the club. These reviews allow the supervisor to review the individual's efforts and contributions to the department, to assess the need for further training, to praise good work, and to require specific improvements in conduct or performance where necessary.

From the employee's perspective, these reviews allow him to know how his efforts are contributing, where he may need improvement, and gives him an opportunity to conduct a dialogue with his supervisor about his work experience.

A detailed explanation of the club's Performance Review Program is provided in the club's Personnel Policies (P-300.11). All supervisors should be thoroughly familiar with the program and be prepared to invest the necessary time to fully utilize this important training, motivation, and feedback tool.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

Discipline is necessary to maintain the direction and focus of the organization and to establish and maintain standards of quality and service. The desire is to achieve excellence and success and supervisors should understand that these goals are dependent upon the quality and commitment of our staff.

Unfortunately, in every group of employees, there are some who have attitude problems, lack commitment, or are not capable of meeting standards. When confronted with such a problem employee, it is the responsibility of supervisors to deal quickly and effectively with the situation before it degrades the efforts of the rest of the staff.

### **Supervisors' Responsibility**

It does no good to have rules, regulations, and policies spelled out, if they are not going to be enforced by all supervisors. Whenever a supervisor overlooks an infraction, he encourages others to similar violations. A lax supervisor can be more damaging than no supervisor at all.

Further, supervisors are expected to actively confront any problem employee in their departments with the aim of correcting the problem. If it cannot be corrected in a reasonable period of time, supervisors are expected to terminate the individual while following established termination policies.

### **Good Communication**

Good communication is important when working with a troubled or problem employee. Some supervisors do not like to confront staff on seemingly "small" issues. As a result, many small problems build up until the supervisor finally blows his top and is ready to fire the employee. However, termination is inappropriate because the supervisor has not previously discussed the problems with the employee, warned him of the consequences of continued problems, or offered any help to correct the problem.

Good communication would prevent this situation. If the supervisor talks frequently with employees, points out minor problems as they occur, addresses continuing problems in a proactive and formal way, an employee will never be surprised should he be terminated.

### **Disciplinary Philosophy**

The club subscribes to the “Hot Stove” approach to discipline. Employees are told what is expected of them and what the consequences are of ignoring rules, requirements, policy, and procedure. If they then touch the hot stove, they get burned.

The rationale behind this philosophy is that supervisors want to deal with staff as adults who are responsible for their own actions and they want to avoid inconsistency in applying rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.

### **Rules, Requirements, Policies, and Procedures**

This philosophy requires that supervisors tell staff what is expected of them. First, do this by spelling out in detail what our rules, requirements, policies, and procedures are. The Employee Handbook contains many club-wide rules for employees. Second, expend some effort through orientations and formal training to make staff fully aware of their responsibilities and the club’s expectations.

### **Fairness and Consistency**

The club’s disciplinary process must be fair and consistent. This will follow naturally from rules, requirements, policies, and procedures being applied fairly and consistently to all employees. Supervisors who are not fair and consistent will create major problems within their departments. There is no quicker way to destroy departmental morale and trust than to play favorites.

Often the perception of fairness is as important as the reality. Supervisors should not only be fair, but also give all appearances of being fair. If some special situation comes up where your decision may seem unfair to some employees, take the time to explain the situation to everyone. This will “clear the air” and more than likely satisfy the staff.

### **Constructive and Progressive**

The club’s disciplinary process is designed to be both constructive and progressive. By this it is meant that all disciplinary actions are aimed at correcting erroneous or inappropriate behavior, and successive disciplinary actions will be progressively more severe. These two aspects are, in reality, part of the same philosophy. While the club wants to help employees overcome their problems, when the problems continue, it wants to get the employee’s attention with progressively more severe consequences.

### **Higher Standard for Supervisors**

Because of a supervisor’s position, experience, training, education, and other factors that led to hiring, they are held to a higher standard of conduct and performance than line staff. In disputes between staff and supervisors, it is expected that supervisors will have solidly documented cases showing thorough investigation of any incident.

While supervisors will always be supported when in the right, line employees will be given the benefit of the doubt when there is insufficient evidence or the absence of a thorough investigation. The best way for a supervisor to ensure that he is supported in his decisions is to have all his facts together before taking disciplinary action.

### Common Disciplinary Problems

While every disciplinary action is different and must be handled on the merits of the situation, there are several common staff problems that crop up with some frequency.

#### **Tardiness, Attendance, and Notification Problems**

Coming to work when scheduled and on time is an important requirement for each employee. When an employee can't make it to work because of illness or family emergency, it is his responsibility to notify his supervisor of the expected lateness or absence as soon as possible.

Supervisors should note employee tardiness or absenteeism in departmental Staff Notes. Speak with any employee who is late or absent without good reason. On the first offense, this may be a short discussion questioning the incident and telling him not to do it again. When a second or similar offense occurs without adequate excuse, you may decide to prepare a Record of Employee Counseling, CRI Form 103. This report should be presented to the employee in a private meeting. Give him a copy for his records, save one for your file, and send one to the Personnel Administrator for his Personnel File. If the same or similar problems continue, you may want to give the employee a final written warning, or you may decide, in light of other concerns, to terminate him.

Lack of appropriate notification for absence is a more serious matter because it involves covering work shifts with other staff and may entail overtime. Certainly, it hurts departmental morale as others are expected to cover the work. While always open to reasonable excuses, supervisors should make it clear to offending staff that this is a serious matter and cannot be tolerated. Depending upon circumstances, you may want to terminate an individual on the second offense.

Whenever an employee is absent on a scheduled workday, the supervisor must complete an Absentee Record, CRI Form 121, and send it to the Personnel Administrator. The completed form must include the reason he is absent and an expected date of return to work. This form is important in that it allows us to properly pay the individual, as well as document any sick time.

#### **Misuse of Sick/Emergency Days**

Sick/Emergency days are a benefit offered by some clubs to employees. Unfortunately, there are some employees who view sick days as additional time off even though they are not sick. They have no reservation about calling in at the last minute to tell their supervisor that they are sick and won't be in to work that day. The problem with this is twofold:

- one, they are lying; and
- two, they force the supervisor to cover the work with another employee at the last minute.

This is unfair to the other employee, hurts departmental morale, may degrade member service, and can result in costly overtime.

While desiring to take staff at their word when they call off sick, supervisors must be vigilant against the employee who misuses sick days as a means of taking time off when he is not really sick. There are a number of tip-offs:

- Calling off sick frequently.
- Calling off sick on a pattern, i.e. before or after holidays, before or after regular days off, on the day after paydays, etc. Patterns are easy to spot using the club's timekeeping software or by reviewing timecards.
- Calling off on particularly busy workdays; for instance, a kitchen employee calling off when there are a large number of parties scheduled.

Supervisors faced with this type of behavior should counsel the employee against misuse of sick days and document the counseling session with a written Record of Employee Counseling. Keeping thorough Staff Notes will also help the supervisor document patterns of calling off sick.

The club's Personnel Policies require that an employee, who misses three or more days for illness, must have a doctor's certificate confirming the nature of his illness. As a supervisor, you also have the right to require any employee whom you suspect of misusing sick days, to provide a doctor's certificate each and every time he calls off sick, but he should be told of this requirement in writing in advance.

Again, fairness and consistency dictate that you have a documented record of excessive and patterned sick day usage. Often, simply requiring the doctor's certificate will reduce, if not eliminate, the problem.

The burden of providing a legible, well-documented doctor's certificate that provides a date, explains the nature of the illness, and is specific in the number of days and which days which the employee is excused from work, rests solely with the employee. If you are not satisfied with the doctor's excuse, ask for a more specific one. If you question the validity of the certificate, call the doctor's office to verify that the employee was seen as indicated.

If the misuse of sick days persists, write up the employee again. Remind him that your responsibility is to the club and getting the necessary work accomplished. Inform him that meeting his work schedule is his responsibility and that if he continues to have excessive or undocumented sickness, you will be forced to terminate him. Make sure that he understands that this is his final warning and that continued misuse of sick days will result in his termination.

One of the questions posed by supervisors is "OK, so he cleans his act up for a time, but then a number of months later, it starts up again. What do I do then?" The answer depends on circumstances. If his behavior has been exemplary for a number of months and then he is out one day without an excuse, you may decide to give him the benefit of the doubt. Certainly you may do this, but don't miss the opportunity to sit him down again, remind him of the consequences should he do it again, and document the session.

You may also decide that if he doesn't get a bona fide doctor's certificate, you'll terminate him. This is also defensible, though the longer the period of time between this and his last offense, might cause the reasonable person to consider another, fresher warning. If the employee had other documented incidents of misconduct and generally unsatisfactory performance, this would probably provide all the necessary cause to terminate the employee. If in doubt, seek the advice of the Personnel Administrator or General Manager.

### **Misconduct**

Misconduct covers a lot of ground and is generally defined as failing to follow the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the club. Some misconduct is more serious. Fighting with another employee on the premises is probably grounds for immediate dismissal for both employees. Though, if it's clear that one was the aggressor and the other the victim, you may decide to terminate one and suspend the other for several days. Again, it depends upon circumstances.

Most often, misconduct is less severe in nature. However, continual misconduct problems, even though of a minor nature, are aggravating and are usually indicative of an employee who has an attitude problem or is not mature enough to work for the club.

The key to successfully dealing with the problem employee is good documentation and communication. If you keep good Staff Notes, meet with the employee to make him aware of the offending conduct, and document any meetings, you should have no trouble in either rehabilitating him or terminating him.

In any case of misconduct the punishment should fit the severity of the offense. Disciplinary procedures are meant to be progressive, that is counseling or write ups for initial offenses, suspensions for repeated problems or more serious misconduct, and terminations after you have worked with the employee and given a final warning or when the offense is of a serious nature. It is also important that punishments be relatively uniform when different employees have similar disciplinary situations.

Supervisors who are unsure how to handle a particular case should consult the Personnel Administrator or General Manager for advice.

### **Unsatisfactory Performance**

Unsatisfactory performance results when an employee who follows all the rules is not capable of doing his work to club standards. Frequently, this employee is not suited for his particular position and is incapable of working fast enough and/or with sufficient quality to meet the requirements of the position.

Supervisors are responsible for doing four things when dealing with an employee whose performance is unsatisfactory:

- Meet with the employee to discuss the unsatisfactory performance. Give specific examples of unsatisfactory work. Again, your Staff Notes will be invaluable in providing this detail.
- In conjunction with the employee, prepare an Employee Development Plan, CRI Form 116, for improving his performance. This plan should be specific and include a timetable of expected improvement.
- Meet with the employee regularly during the plan period to review work, offer support and praise where warranted, and make corrections or suggestions. The desired outcome from this process is a rehabilitated employee who will meet our performance expectations.
- Document all discussions, meetings, the development plan, and keep thorough Staff Notes during the plan period.

If the employee rises to the occasion and improves his performance, inform him so. You may wish to maintain some sort of modified development plan to continue to monitor the situation for some period of time. All documentation from the incident should stay in his file in case there are future problems.

If he is unable to meet performance expectations, you may seek a termination decision. To support that decision, you will need:

- One written warning of unsatisfactory performance in addition to any unsatisfactory performance reviews. There should be consistency in the record, i.e., there should not be “glowing” reviews in his file from the same time period that you were counseling and working with him about unsatisfactory performance.
- Documentation of meetings and an Employee Development Plan for improvement.
- A solid documentary case to show that he could not or did not improve his performance.

As with all terminations, you will need the approval of the General Manager.

### **Bad Attitude**

Because of the importance of attitude to our success as a club and of the direct impact of attitude on service, a supervisor can and will terminate an employee who exhibits a chronically bad attitude. Disciplinary actions will not be based upon the term "attitude," but rather on the evidence of bad attitude as seen in facial expression, tone of voice, persistent grumbling, lack of cooperation, surliness, unfriendliness, lack of courtesy, uncontrolled temper, and constant complaining.

As with any other offending behavior, supervisors must document the problem and efforts made to correct it. If you doubt your judgment, get other opinions. Employees with bad attitudes are readily noticed by all with whom they have contact. As with any other disciplinary action, when repeated counseling reports have been given and the behavior does not improve in a reasonable period of time, supervisors may choose to terminate the employee.

### **Depends on Circumstances**

Most staff disciplinary actions are dependent upon circumstances. There is no cut and dried formula for handling any particular disciplinary action. Supervisors must rely on judgment to evaluate the circumstances.

Having said this, it is still important for supervisors to be as fair and consistent as possible. You may be able to justify why you will give a “good” employee more leeway than a chronically “bad” employee, but there is still the danger of the perception of favoritism. If you terminate one employee for being late three times, but let another get away with repeated tardiness, you are opening the club up for a wrongful termination or discrimination suit.

### **Employee Counseling/Disciplinary Sessions**

Periodically it becomes necessary to meet privately with an employee to discuss problems with his conduct or work performance. Such meetings can merely be counseling sessions (i.e., discussions) or they can be more formal disciplinary sessions.

The difference between the two depends upon your aims for the meeting. If you wish to have an exploratory discussion to find out what is wrong and to constructively criticize conduct or performance, a counseling session is appropriate. If you wish to discipline or punish an employee for more serious or repeated misconduct, a disciplinary session is in order.

### Conducting Counseling/Disciplinary Sessions

How you conduct counseling and disciplinary sessions has a lot to do with their success.

First, the meeting must be held in private, in a quiet, uninterrupted setting. You may wish to include a witness, such as a trusted associate or the Personnel Administrator. Never use a departmental peer of the employee being counseled.

Second, the tone of the session should match the purpose.

- If the session is for counseling, the meeting should be less formal, more comfortable, and supportive. The conversation should focus on constructive criticism, problem discovery, and proposed solutions. While this should be done in a supportive way, it is also necessary to communicate to the employee the negative consequences of continued problems.
- When the purpose of the meeting is disciplinary, the session should be formal and the tone serious. The idea is to impress upon the employee the serious nature his actions, the impending consequences if he does not improve his behavior or performance, and the issuance of the disciplinary report, suspension, or termination, as the case may warrant.

Third, your investigation of any incident or your documentation of a series of problems must be thorough and detailed. Do not go off half-cocked to write somebody up before investigating. You may have an incomplete picture of what happened and be embarrassed when the full story comes out.

Fourth, after telling the employee the reason for the meeting and relating the incident or allegations as you know them, give him a chance to tell his side of the story. He may have mitigating circumstances or a very different version of what happened. His story may require further investigation or corroboration. You may need to call other people in as witnesses or to contradict his version.

Fifth, after hearing his side of the story, decide what action you will take and prepare the Record of Employee Counseling, describing the incident or problem, allowing him to offer any response, and providing your summary of the counseling or disciplinary action.

Last, present him with the Report. Ask for his signature. If he chooses not to sign, so note it. Make sure the Report is complete. Provide the employee with a copy; send one to Personnel Administrator for inclusion in his Personnel File, and save one for your departmental files.

### Documenting the Session

The key to successful disciplinary actions is good documentation. Supervisors have two documentary tools at their disposal – Staff Notes and the Record of Employee Counseling.

As previously mentioned, Staff Notes are daily or weekly notes made about staff performance. They should contain instances of tardiness, absences, failure to follow instructions and procedures, complaints, arguments or disputes with other staff, instances of outstanding performance, etc. These brief notes are invaluable in helping a supervisor reconstruct circumstances, give details in review sessions, or document continuing disciplinary problems of a minor nature.

Records of Employee Counseling are to be used for formal documentation of problems when you wish to give the employee a copy. These reports must be filled out completely and accurately. If you fail to enter a date, fail to sign it, fail to present it to the employee, or fail to get his signature or note “chose not to sign,” the record may be useless as documentary evidence.

### **Right to Respond**

Each employee subject to a disciplinary action or unsatisfactory performance review has a right to respond. Such response should come within 7 days of the report or review.

Supervisors should consider the response, amend the report or review if warranted, and attach the response without alteration to all copies of the disciplinary report or review (Personnel File copy and departmental copy).

### **Choosing Not to Sign**

Employees are requested to sign all disciplinary reports and performance reviews, but have an absolute right not to sign. The absence of the employee’s signature will not affect the validity of the document, so long as you note that it was presented to him. If an employee chooses not to sign, you do this by writing “chose not to sign” and the date on the signature line. Do not use the words “refused to sign” as this connotes coercion or lack of choice.

## **Terminations**

Terminations result from the failure of an employee to meet club standards of performance and conduct. Because of the many legal ramifications associated with inappropriate and poorly documented terminations, it is the policy of the club that all terminations:

- Have the General Manager’s approval.
- Be thoroughly documented with reasons supported by Staff Notes, Records of Employee Counseling, Performance Reviews, Employee Development Plans, and other written records. Further, an Employee Separation Document, CRI Form 117, must be properly filled out and turned in to the Personnel Administrator.
- Should not come as a surprise to the employee, except for immediate termination for serious misconduct. In other words, the supervisor must have spent time discussing the problem(s) with the employee prior to arriving at a termination decision.

### **Reasons for Termination**

Other than layoffs, there are only two reasons to terminate an employee – misconduct or unsatisfactory work performance.

#### **Misconduct**

Misconduct is the most prevalent reason for termination and is defined as failing to conduct oneself according to the rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and standards of the club.

In most cases of misconduct, the employee will be counseled regarding his offending behavior and a written record will be made of the incident. Should he repeat the offending behavior or have other similar conduct problems, he will be written up again. If the problem continues, the supervisor should consider terminating the employee. In all cases, the General Manager must approve the termination and the supervisor must have solid evidence of corrective counseling and disciplinary reports to support a decision to terminate.

In the case of serious misconduct such as theft or fighting on the property, an employee may be terminated without the progressive steps of counseling and writing disciplinary reports, though the supervisor should always give the employee an opportunity to present his version of what happened. Supervisors should consider any mitigating circumstances in the employee's version before deciding to seek a termination.

While it is impossible to compile a list of all the possible reasons for which an employee may be terminated, the following list is provided as a representative guide:

- Possession of a weapon at work or while on the premises.
- Misappropriation or destruction of property. Abuse or misuse of property.
- Falsification of application or other records or lying to a supervisor about a work-related matter.
- Removal of items belonging to clients, the club, members, and other employees from club premises.
- Conviction of a felony.
- Immoral or indecent conduct.
- Acceptance for personal use of any commission, discounts, rebates, or other special considerations from purveyors providing goods or rendering services.
- Threat of bodily harm, fighting, physical altercation, or disorderly conduct at work.
- Unauthorized possession of or drinking of any alcoholic beverage or use of drugs (other than those as prescribed by a physician) at work, or reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Unauthorized absence or repeated tardiness.
- Refusal to allow packages to be inspected.
- Sleeping on the job.
- Punching a time card other than an employee's own and a pattern of punching in more than 5 minutes before a scheduled shift without authorization of a supervisor.
- Sexual or other forms of harassment.
- Insubordination. Refusal or failure to perform reasonable assignments or direction from a manager or supervisor.
- Use of abusive, profane, or obscene language.
- Conduct and/or appearance unbecoming to an employee that brings discredit to the club.
- Complaining about club operations or policies to members or guests.
- Discourteous treatment of fellow employees, members, or guests.
- Habitual tardiness or absenteeism.
- Abuse of sick/emergency leave.
- Chronic bad attitude as evidenced by the employee's behavior.
- Failing to meet job performance standards.
- Negligent use, resulting in loss, of club property, particularly master keys and keys to storerooms.
- Disrespectful attitude or actions toward members, guests, or supervisors.
- Failure to follow the policies and procedures of the club and/or instructions from supervisors.

There may be other reasons for disciplining or discharging an employee, but it is preferable to see an employee improve rather than be forced to terminate him or her. Corrective action is the basis for actions taken under the club disciplinary procedures.

#### **Unsatisfactory Performance**

Terminating an employee for unsatisfactory performance occurs less frequently and is a more involved process. The crux of the matter is that the club should show a good faith effort to work with an employee who is having trouble meeting his work requirements.

Evidence of this good faith effort is proper training, retraining as needed, and solid documentation that the supervisor has worked with the employee to try to help him improve his performance. Such documentation would include Staff Notes, Records of Employee Counseling, Performance Reviews, records of meetings, an Employee Development Plan and timetable for the employee to improve his performance, and written warnings to the employee that he is not meeting performance expectations.

It is the policy of the club that no employee will be terminated for unsatisfactory performance without one written warning which specifically describe the items of unsatisfactory performance and include an action plan for improvement. Again, no termination will take place without the express approval of the General Manager.

#### **How to Terminate**

##### **Immediate Termination**

If decide to seek a termination for serious misconduct, send the employee home immediately and inform him that you will be in touch with him. Then, present the matter to the General Manager at your earliest opportunity. When sent home in this manner, the employee is in a temporary suspension with pay category.

Once the decision has been made to terminate, contact the employee and tell him to come in for a meeting. It is against some States' laws to call an employee in on his day off to terminate him. Therefore, you should set up the meeting on one of his scheduled workdays.

Submit the employee's final time sheet including a minimum of four hours pay for the day of the meeting. The time sheet must be approved by the supervisor and sent to the Controller with a request to prepare the employee's final paycheck. At the scheduled termination meeting, inform the employee of your decision to terminate, collect any uniforms and keys he may have in his possession, and present him with his final paycheck.

##### **Other Terminations**

In all terminations where there has been a series of misconduct or unresolved unsatisfactory performance, the supervisor should present to the General Manager the documentary evidence that the employee has been counseled, been given adequate warning, and been given reasonable time to improve.

Once the approval to terminate has been received, set up a meeting with the employee on his next scheduled workday to inform him of the decision, turn his final time sheet in to the Controller with a request for a final paycheck. At the termination meeting, collect any uniforms and keys, and present him with his final paycheck.

### Conclusion

Developing your employees to their fullest potential and establishing and maintaining discipline in your department are two of your core responsibilities as a supervisor. Ultimately your success and the success of the club depends upon how well you train, lead, motivate, and develop your staff.

Establishing and maintaining discipline in a reasonable, fair, and consistent way contributes to good morale and improved departmental performance. It will also protect you and the club from wrongful termination and discrimination lawsuits.

Both of these issues – employee development and discipline – are inherently easy if you sincerely value your employees. If you understand and apply the Golden Rule, if you treat staff as you would wish to be treated, if you are sensitive to their needs and concerns, you will find that everything covered in this manual is nothing more than common sense.