

SECTION 5.7

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

A. Corrective Action

The County's objective is to establish and maintain standards of employee conduct and supervisory practices that will, in the interest of the County and its employees, support and promote effective county operations. Such supervisory practices include administering corrective action when employee conduct and/or issues related to conditions of employment or performance problems arise. Major elements of this policy include:

1. Constructive effort by the supervisor to help employees achieve full satisfactory standards of conduct and job performance.
2. Correcting employee shortcomings or negative behavior to the extent required.
3. Notice to employees through communicating this policy that discharge will result from continued or gross violation of employee standards of conduct or unsatisfactory job performance.
4. Written documentation of disciplinary warnings given and corrective action taken.
5. Documentation of corrective action will become part of the employee's personnel record.

B. Options for Corrective Action

Depending on the facts and circumstances involved in each situation, supervisors may choose to begin corrective action at any step up to and including a recommendation for immediate dismissal. However, in most cases, the following steps should be followed:

1. **Oral Warning** - For infractions the County deems to be minor, the employee should at a minimum be issued an oral warning. If the situation does not improve within a reasonable time (not longer than 90 days, depending on the seriousness of the issue), the supervisor may repeat the measure and may implement a more serious option.
2. **Written Warning Notice** - For repeated minor infractions, or a more substantial infraction, the employee should at a minimum be issued a written warning notice (copy following). The Department Head/Elected Official must approve the written warning prior to it being given to the employee. If the situation does not improve immediately and is not sustained, the Supervisor may take steps that would lead to the termination of employment of the employee by the Department Head/Elected Official or his/her designee.

The written warning notice should be prepared following a corrective action discussion with the employee. The written warning should include: (1) the policy or rule violated or a description of the unacceptable behavior; (2) date(s), time(s) and location(s) of the offense; (3) the facts surrounding the incident; (4) what specific actions the employee should take to correct the matter; (5) the timeframe (if applicable); and (6) the consequences if not corrected. The employee should be given an opportunity to comment in writing and should be asked to sign the notice, acknowledging receipt. Three copies of the notice will be distributed as follows: (1) employee; (2) supervisor; and (3) personnel folder. (See Correction Action Notice Form on the following page)

3. **Suspension** - In certain instances, it is appropriate for employees to be suspended. Those instances could include: (1) prior to terminating an employee for performance related issues - the goal would be to impress upon the employee the seriousness of the situation and to give him/her the opportunity to voluntarily resign or return to work more cognizant of the realization that immediate and sustained performance is required or they will be terminated; or (2) if events compel a supervisor to take immediate action when discharge appears possible, the supervisor will immediately suspend the employee for a specified period, pending an investigation. The employee will be required to leave the premises immediately. The suspension/investigation period will last no longer than three working days, except in highly unusual circumstances. The objective of the suspension would be to determine if termination is the proper decision. Responsibility for managing the investigation will be that of the Department Head/Elected Official along with the Director of Human Resources. The Human Resources Department should be notified immediately for deactivation of employee ID badge.

4. **Termination** - For infractions management deems to be sufficiently serious, or continued failure to respond appropriately to prior corrective action, termination of employment is appropriate. Only the Department Head/Elected Official or his/her designee is authorized to terminate employment. The Human Resources Department should be notified immediately for deactivation of employee ID badge.