

Ten Ways to Implement Formal Corrective Action

- 1] Make certain that you are responding: A) to serious non-performance relating to the job description, and B) in a way that is consistent with your agency personnel process. It is important to consult with your agency's personnel officer before beginning formal corrective action.
- 2] Clearly separate the problem performance from the person who is the subject of the action. Most of the time, the employee will see the process as a personal attack due to problems with their relationship with the supervisor. This should be quickly defused.
- 3] The plan and your behavior should focus on successful correction of the problem. This is essential because: It clarifies your purpose in you own mind, and will make any later negative employment action more justifiable [you gave him/her every break]; It will strongly defend the fairness of the process should a decision be appealed.
- 4] The corrective action plan should be focused clearly on the sub-standard performance issues. The clarity reinforces the importance of the performance issue and the focus allows the employee to devote most of his/her energy to fixing the problem.
- 5] The plan must be time-limited. Ninety (90) days is a benchmark timeline, however the nature of the problem will dictate the actual time frame. It is important to be firm but flexible, for instance, extending time due to verifiable illness. It is equally important to insure that the time allowed is not extended too far into the future. If the problem can exist for a long period of time, is it important enough to warrant this corrective procedure?
- 6] Review progress on the plan every three weeks, at a minimum. This formal review will be used to assess and document progress towards the goal. Ninety days is 12.86 weeks; review every three weeks allows four formal reviews before the final one.
- 7] The employee should be assured that the supervisor and through the supervisor, necessary agency resources are available to help at any point. Also, the employee can ask for a review at any time in addition to those scheduled. The goal is always successful completion of the plan.
- 8] The plan's goals must be laid out in a process that provides benchmarks and break points that allow the employee to see that they are (or are not) progressing toward the goal. For instance: a caseworker who was not doing any work with his clients had as a goal having his case records all brought up to date with timely case recording. (His twenty cases reflected the lack of activity) The supervisor requested that seven cases per month be updated and submitted for review. In this way, activity will be directed in ways that are clearly understood by each side.
- 9] The benchmarks and process must be crafted so that they are easily measured in ways that are equally easy to document. For instance: a supervisor had received some

information that a caseworker was being disruptive during inter-agency meetings. After verifying the behavior, the supervisor designed a plan that lasted three months and, aside from providing resources to the worker, stipulated that the supervisor would receive no negative feedback from community agencies about the worker's behavior during meetings. The result here was that measurement was easy: negative community feedback (which also took the personal issue of supervisory judgment out of the equation) and documentation consisted of testimony of meeting participants.

10] Document all activity involving the corrective action. This does not have to create an overwhelming workload. Buy an inexpensive spiral notebook and keep it in a handy drawer. As soon as any activity is concluded, record in the notebook, the date, time, actors and a shorthand synopsis of the event. Such recording will take less than three minutes and will be the evidence that supports you in the event of appeal.