STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Employee Disciplinary SOP

Document no.	SOP-HR-004
Revision	1.0
Owner	HR Director
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To address performance and conduct issues consistently and fairly, with clear documentation, so employees understand what is expected and have a genuine chance to improve.

2. Scope

Applies to conduct and performance issues handled outside the standard review cycle. All steps follow company policy, the employee's contract and local employment law, with HR and legal counsel involved where the situation warrants it.

Definitions

Verbal warning	A documented first-level conversation about a performance or conduct issue, recorded in the employee's file even though it is delivered verbally.
Written warning	A formal written notice describing the issue, the expected improvement and the consequence of no improvement.
Performance improvement plan (PIP)	A written plan with specific goals, support and a timeline used to give an employee a structured opportunity to improve.

3. Responsibilities

Employee	Responds to the concern raised, takes part in improvement discussions, and can respond in writing to any warning.
Manager	Identifies the issue, documents examples, holds the discussion and monitors any improvement plan.
HR Generalist	Advises the manager on process and consistency, reviews documentation and attends key meetings.
HR Director	Approves escalation to written warning, a performance improvement plan or termination, involving legal counsel as needed.

RACI matrix

Activity	Employee	Manager	HR Generalist	HR Director
Identify and document the issue	I	R/A	C	I
Consult HR before acting	-	R	R/A	C
Hold the disciplinary conversation	C	R/A	C	I

Activity	Employee	Manager	HR Generalist	HR Director
Approve escalation or termination	I	C	C	R/A
Monitor improvement plan	R	R/A	C	I

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- HRIS or employee file system
- Incident or performance documentation form
- Verbal and written warning templates
- Performance improvement plan template
- Company policy and employee handbook

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Observe and document the issue** The manager documents the specific conduct or performance concern as soon as it happens, including dates, facts and any relevant policy, without relying on memory later.	Manager	☐
5.2	**Consult HR before taking action** The manager discusses the issue with an HR generalist before any conversation with the employee, to confirm the right level of response and check for any prior history. **Checkpoint:** No warning is issued without HR reviewing the facts first.	Manager	☐
5.3	**Gather facts fairly** The manager, with HR support, gathers relevant facts, which may include speaking with the employee and any witnesses, and keeps the review focused on the specific concern. **Warning:** Keep details of the investigation confidential and share them only with people who need to know.	Manager	☐
5.4	**Decide the appropriate response** HR and the manager decide the appropriate response, such as a verbal warning, written warning or performance improvement plan, based on the facts, policy and any prior history, following company policy and local law. **Checkpoint:** The response level is proportionate and consistent with how similar issues have been handled.	HR Director	☐
5.5	**Hold the disciplinary conversation** The manager meets with the employee, usually with HR present, to explain the concern, listen to the employee's response, and outline the expected improvement.	Manager	☐
5.6	**Document the warning** The manager or HR generalist documents the conversation using the appropriate warning template, states the required improvement and timeline, and places a copy in the employee's file.	Manager	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.7	**Give the employee a chance to respond** The employee is given the opportunity to add written comments to the warning or raise concerns through the grievance process if they disagree with the outcome.	Employee	☐
5.8	**Set up a performance improvement plan if needed** For performance issues that continue, the manager and HR create a performance improvement plan with specific goals, support and a review date, and review it with the employee.	Manager	☐
5.9	**Monitor progress** The manager checks in with the employee at the agreed intervals during the improvement plan and documents whether the required improvement is being met.	Manager	☐
5.10	**Decide the outcome** At the end of the plan or warning period, HR and the manager review progress and decide whether to close the matter, extend support or escalate further, involving legal counsel where the situation may lead to termination. **Checkpoint:** Any decision to escalate to termination is reviewed by HR and, where appropriate, legal counsel before it is communicated.	HR Director	☐
5.11	**Communicate the outcome** The manager, usually with HR present, communicates the final outcome to the employee in writing and answers any questions about next steps.	Manager	☐
5.12	**File and retain records** HR files all documentation from the process in the employee's record, retaining it per your records retention policy and local law.	HR Generalist	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every warning is preceded by documented facts and an HR consultation.
- Warning letters state the specific issue, expected improvement and timeline.
- Response levels are consistent with how similar past issues were handled.
- Employee responses and appeals are attached to the file, not left out.

7. Records

- Incident or performance documentation
- Verbal and written warning letters
- Performance improvement plan and check-in notes
- Final outcome letter

8. KPIs

- Time from documented issue to first conversation
- Percentage of improvement plans reviewed on schedule
- Rate of issues resolved without escalation
- Consistency of outcomes for similar issues

9. Common mistakes

- Issuing a warning without consulting HR first.
- Relying on vague statements instead of specific, dated examples.

- Skipping the employee's chance to respond before a decision is finalized.
- Letting an improvement plan lapse without a documented check-in.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Alexa Uskova

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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