

Progressive Discipline Policy Template

The following template gives HR teams a starting structure to adapt to their organization's size, workforce classification and applicable jurisdiction. Legal review is recommended before implementation, particularly for organizations operating across multiple states or countries.

Purpose

This policy outlines a structured approach to address employee performance or behavior issues in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The goal is to correct issues, support improvement and maintain a positive workplace culture.

Policy Statement

[Company Name] is committed to providing employees with clear expectations and opportunities to improve. Progressive discipline is designed to address concerns promptly and proportionately, while ensuring compliance with applicable laws and organizational values.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of [Company Name]. It does not alter the at-will employment relationship unless otherwise stated by law or contract.

Guiding Principles

- Fairness and consistency in application
- Confidentiality throughout the process
- Documentation of all steps
- Opportunity for employee input and improvement

Steps in Progressive Discipline

(Customize steps based on organizational needs)

Step 1: Verbal Warning

- **Purpose:** Address minor or first-time issues.
- **Action:** Supervisor meets with employee to discuss concern and expectations.
- **Documentation:** Note in manager's file or HR system.

Step 2: Written Warning

- **Purpose:** Address repeated or more serious issues.
- **Action:** Formal written notice outlining the issue, expectations, and timeline for improvement.
- **Documentation:** Copy provided to employee and stored in personnel file.

Step 3: Final Warning

- **Purpose:** Address continued issues or significant misconduct.
- **Action:** Meeting with employee and HR; clear statement that failure to improve may result in termination.
- **Documentation:** Signed acknowledgment required.

Step 4: Suspension (Optional)

- **Purpose:** Temporary removal from work for serious infractions.
- **Action:** Paid or unpaid suspension as permitted by law.
- **Documentation:** Detailed record of reason and duration.

Step 5: Termination

- **Purpose:** When prior steps fail or for severe misconduct.
- **Action:** Employment ends following HR and legal review.
- **Documentation:** Final record maintained in personnel file.

Employee Rights

- Opportunity to respond to concerns
- Access to support resources (e.g., training, counseling)
- Right to appeal decisions per company policy

Exceptions

[Company Name] reserves the right to bypass steps for severe misconduct or legal compliance.

Acknowledgment

Employees must sign an acknowledgment confirming they have read and understood this policy.

Customization Tips for Customers

- Add examples of behaviors that trigger each step.
- Include timelines for improvement (e.g., 30 days after written warning).
- Align with local labor laws and union agreements if applicable.
- Integrate with HR Acuity for documentation and tracking.