

The New Brunswick Small Business HR CONNEXION

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TIPS ON DEVELOPING DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS

Don't wait until you have a problem to plan your progressive discipline program. Having a pre-defined process for discipline will help your company have a more desirable outcome when dealing with an unpleasant workplace issue.

The following tips should help:

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- i** Make sure that employees receive, read and sign a copy of your company's rules and policies. Put the signed copies in their personnel files.
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- i** Keep your expectations about job performance and duties known to your employees. Manage performance on a daily basis, and conduct regular performance reviews.
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- i** Start a process to correct behavior as soon as the problem or behaviour occurs. Do not "let this one slide."
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- i** Apply your discipline process fairly and objectively.
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- i** Be clear about the problem. Investigate the incident or situation before making a judgment or starting a discipline process.
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- i** Don't use this process to avoid termination for cause. If the offense has been identified in your company policies as one for which an employee will face termination, using a disciplinary process will undermine the credibility of your company and set an unfavorable precedent.
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- i** Inform employees why they are being disciplined and give them opportunities to respond to the problem.
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- i** Document all disciplinary actions, whether oral or written.
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- i** Have employees sign the disciplinary documents and keep a copy in their files.
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- i** Be well prepared for all disciplinary interviews in advance and bring the documentation to the interview.
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- i** Hold all disciplinary discussions in private, preferably with the employee and the direct supervisor.

i For all stages of progressive discipline, be sure to identify what the problem is, why it is a problem, what the desired performance or behaviour is, and what will happen if the performance or behavior is not corrected in the time allotted.

i Be specific and factual – record details such as times, dates, names, places, problem descriptions, actions agreed upon, and the date and time for a follow-up. Specific statements are easier to prove if the employee disputes the claim.

i Describe the events as they happen and back up conclusions with your observations and the observations of other employees, if possible.

i Be cool and calm – do not let anger or frustration come across in your discussions or your documentation. Be as objective and factual as possible.

SOURCE USED TO DEVELOP THIS TIPS SHEET:
The Newfoundland and Labrador HR MANAGER (<http://www.nlhrmanager.ca>)
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