



Disciplinary Policy and Dismissal Procedures

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INTRODUCTION

1. It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole organisation.
2. The rules set standards of performance and behaviour whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals, where they are failing to meet the required standards, and not be seen as a means of punishment.
3. Every effort will be made to ensure that any action taken under this procedure is fair, with you being given the opportunity to state your case and appeal against any decision that you consider to be unjust.
4. The following rules and procedures should ensure that:-
 - a. the correct procedure is used when inviting you to a disciplinary hearing;
 - b. you are fully aware of the standards of performance, action and behaviour required of you;
 - c. disciplinary action, where necessary, is taken speedily and in a fair, uniform and consistent manner;
 - d. you will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and the opportunity to present your side of the case. On some occasions temporary suspension on full pay may be necessary in order that an uninterrupted investigation can take place. This must not be regarded as disciplinary action or a penalty of any kind;
 - e. other than for an "off the record" informal reprimand, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee, who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf, at all stages of the formal disciplinary process;
 - f. you will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct; and
 - g. if you are disciplined, you will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and you will have the right to appeal against the finding and the penalty.

DISCIPLINARY RULES

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the specific examples of unsatisfactory conduct, misconduct and gross misconduct shown in this handbook, a breach of other conditions, procedures, rules etc. within this handbook will also result in the disciplinary procedure being used to deal with such matters.



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RULES COVERING UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT AND MISCONDUCT

(These are examples only and not an exhaustive list)

You will be liable to disciplinary action if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:-

- a. failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures;
- b. smoking in breach of our or our clients' policy during working hours;
- c. consumption of alcohol during working hours;
- d. persistent absenteeism and/or lateness;
- e. unsatisfactory standards or output of work;
- f. rudeness towards customers, members of the public or other employees, objectionable or insulting behaviour, harassment, bullying or bad language;
- g. failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to our business and its affairs during your normal working hours;
- h. unauthorised use of E-mail and Internet;
- i. failure to carry out all reasonable instructions or follow our rules and procedures;
- j. unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property;
- k. failure to report immediately any damage to property or premises caused by you;
- l. use of our vehicles without approval or the private use of our pool vehicles without authorisation;
- m. failure to report any incident whilst driving our vehicles, whether or not personal injury or vehicle damage occurs;
- n. if your work involves driving, failure to report immediately any type of driving conviction, or any summons which may lead to your conviction; and
- o. carrying unauthorised goods or passengers in our pool vehicles or the use of our vehicles for personal gain.

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

1. Where one of the unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct rules has been broken and if, upon investigation, it is shown to be due to your extreme carelessness or has a serious or substantial effect upon our operation or reputation; you may be issued with a final written warning in the first instance.
2. You may receive a final written warning as the first course of action, if, in an alleged gross misconduct disciplinary matter, upon investigation, there is shown to be some level of mitigation resulting in it being treated as an offence just short of dismissal.

RULES COVERING GROSS MISCONDUCT

Occurrences of gross misconduct are very rare because the penalty is dismissal without notice and without any previous warning being issued. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples of gross misconduct. However, any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct. Examples of offences that will normally be deemed as gross misconduct include serious instances of:-

- a. theft or fraud;
- b. physical violence or bullying;
- c. deliberate damage to property;
- d. deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment;



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- e. possession, or being under the influence, of illegal drugs at work; and
- f. breach of health and safety rules that endangers the lives of, or may cause serious injury to, employees or any other person.

(The above examples are illustrative and do not form an exhaustive list.)

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Disciplinary action taken against you will be based on the following procedure:-

Offence	First Occasion	Second Occasion	Third Occasion	Fourth Occasion
UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT	Formal verbal warning	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal
MISCONDUCT	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal	
SERIOUS MISCONDUCT	Final written warning	Dismissal		
GROSS MISCONDUCT	Dismissal			

2. We retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal but you will retain the right to a disciplinary hearing and you will have the right of appeal.
3. If a disciplinary penalty is imposed it will be in line with the procedure outlined above, which may encompass a formal verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, or dismissal, and full details will be given to you.
4. In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and any further breach of the rules in relation to similar or entirely independent matters of misconduct will be treated as further disciplinary matters and allow the continuation of the disciplinary process through to dismissal if the warnings are not heeded.

DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY

The operation of the disciplinary procedure contained, in the previous section, is based on the following authority for the various levels of disciplinary action. However, the list does not prevent a higher level of seniority progressing any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

	Person authorised to take Disciplinary Action in the case of:	
	Management	Other Employees
Formal verbal warning		



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Written warning	
Final written warning	
Dismissal	

PERIOD OF WARNINGS

- Formal verbal warning**
A formal verbal warning will normally be disregarded after a three month period.
- Written warning**
A written warning will normally be disregarded after a six month period.
- Final written warning**
A final written warning will normally be disregarded after a twelve month period.

GENERAL NOTES

- If you are in a supervisory or managerial position then demotion to a lower status at the appropriate rate may be considered as an alternative to dismissal except in cases of gross misconduct.
- In exceptional circumstances, suspension from work without pay for up to five days as an alternative to dismissal (except dismissal for gross misconduct) may be considered by the person authorised to dismiss.
- Gross misconduct offences will result in dismissal without notice.
- You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

CAPABILITY/DISCIPLINARY APPEAL PROCEDURE

- You have the right to lodge an appeal in respect of any capability/disciplinary action taken against you.
- If you wish to exercise this right you should apply either verbally or in writing to the person indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.
- An appeal against a formal warning or dismissal should give details of why the penalty imposed is too severe, inappropriate or unfair in the circumstances.
- The appeal procedure will normally be conducted by a member of staff/Director not previously connected with the process so that an independent decision into the severity and appropriateness of the action taken can be made.
- If you are appealing on the grounds that you have not committed the offence then your appeal may take the form of a complete re-hearing and reappraisal of all matters so that the person who conducts the appeal can make an independent decision before deciding to grant or refuse the appeal.



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You may be accompanied at any stage of the appeal hearing by a fellow employee of your choice, who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf. The result of the appeal will be made known to you in writing within five working days after the hearing.

GENERAL DISMISSAL AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

This section of the Employee Handbook does not form part of your Contract of Employment but the procedures set out below may apply, where legally required, in the specific circumstances described in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.



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Step 1: Statement of grounds for action and invitation to meeting.

Your alleged conduct or characteristics, or other circumstances, which lead us to contemplate dismissing or taking disciplinary action against you, will be set out in writing. This statement, or a copy of it, will be sent to you and you will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

Step 2: Meeting.

The meeting will take place before action is taken, except in the case where disciplinary action consists of suspension.

The meeting will not take place unless:

- (a) you have been informed what the basis was for including in the statement, under Step 1, the ground or grounds in it; and
- (b) you have had a reasonable opportunity to consider your response to that information.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

After the meeting, you will be informed of the decision and notified of the right to appeal against the decision if you are not satisfied with it.

Step 3: Appeal.

If you wish to appeal, you must inform us.

If you inform us of your wish to appeal, you will be invited to attend a further meeting.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.

The appeal meeting need not take place before the dismissal or disciplinary action takes effect.

After the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision.

General Requirements:

The following requirements will be adhered to in respect of the above procedures (so far as applicable):

Each step and action under the procedure will be taken without unreasonable delay.

Timing and location of meetings will be reasonable.

Meetings will be conducted in a manner that enables both parties to explain their cases.

In the case of appeal meetings, which are not the first meeting, we will, so far as is reasonably practicable, be represented by a more senior manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most senior manager attended that meeting).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. It is important that if you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your employment you should have an effective means by which such a grievance can be aired and, where appropriate, resolved.



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2. Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent you from informally raising any matter you may wish to mention. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record. However, if you wish to raise a formal grievance you should normally do so in writing from the outset. Whilst we will give the same consideration to any grievance that you raise verbally, provided that you make it clear that you wish it to be treated formally, you should be aware that, in most circumstances, the law requires you to provide us with written details of your grievance before taking certain types of legal action.
3. You have the right to be accompanied at any stage of the procedure by a fellow employee who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf to explain the situation more clearly.
4. If you feel aggrieved at any matter relating to your work (except personal harassment, for which there is a separate procedure following this section), you should first raise the matter with the person specified in your Statement of Main Terms of Employment, explaining fully the nature and extent of your grievance. You will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which your grievance will be investigated fully. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within ten working days of the meeting, including your right of appeal.
5. If you wish to appeal you must inform a Director within five working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting, which you must take all reasonable steps to attend. As far as reasonably practicable, the company will be represented by a more senior manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most senior manager attended that meeting).
6. Following the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.