

## **STEPS TO PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

- A.** Set clear expectations right from the beginning of employment.
- B.** Establish a climate of communication with employees.
- C.** Maintain an open door policy
- D.** Employee issues must be addressed immediately; waiting to address issues sends the message that you condone the behavior.

*Progressive discipline actions generally begin with the least severe approach and progress to a more severe approach if the employee's behavior continues. Ideally if you confront the behavior ASAP the employee will discontinue the behavior and no further discipline will be required.*

- 1. Verbal/Counsel:** Engage the employee in a problem solving dialogue. Ask the employee what is going on, keep the conversation focused on performance, if personal issues arise suggest EAP if applicable. Document your conversation informally.
- 2. First written:** Counsel again, make your expectations clearly known to the employee. Document the conversation. You may write this up *after* your discussion; if you choose to do this let the employee know that you are doing so and that you will have them sign the document after it is written. Don't wait too long to write this up; one or two days maximum. Give the employee a copy of the document.
- 3. Second written:** this is an official warning that a repeat of the behavior will result in further disciplinary measures. Both the problem and needed correction should be specific and clear to the employee. Include a deadline for improvement. Have the employee sign the document and give them a copy.
- 4. Final warning/Action Plan or suspension:** this is the last phase before termination; *make this clear to the employee*. Action Plans must be clear and concise. Be direct and matter of fact; at this point you are done with coaching the individual. Have the employee sign the document and give them a copy.
- 5. Termination:** check with H.R. to ensure that you are terminating legally and ethically

**Employees should always be given the opportunity to respond to disciplinary actions in writing.**