

# Employee Discipline

Discipline is the regulation and modulation of human activities to produce a controlled performance.

Discipline is employee learning that promotes self-control, dedication, and orderly conduct.

## Definition

According to **Richard D. Calhoun**, “Discipline is the force that prompts individuals or groups to observe rules, regulations, standards and procedures deemed necessary for an organization.”

# Who Is Responsible For Discipline?

The immediate supervisor is responsible for maintaining discipline and morale among the employees

The line supervisor is responsible for the enforcement of company rules.

Disciplinary action should, therefore, be done by the line supervisor.

# Nature of Discipline

According to **Meggison**, discipline involves the following 3 things.

1. Self-discipline.
2. Orderly behaviour.
3. Punishment

## Self-discipline

implies that a person brings the discipline in himself with a determination to achieve the goals that he has set for himself in life.

## Orderly behaviour

refers to discipline as a condition that must exist for an orderly behaviour in the organization.

## Punishment

is used to prevent indiscipline. When a worker goes astray in his conduct, he has to be punished for the same and the recurrences of it must be prevented.

Discipline can either be positive or negative.

## 1. Positive Discipline

Positive discipline involves creation of an atmosphere in the organisation whereby employees willingly conform to the established rules and regulations. Positive discipline can be achieved through rewards and effective leadership.

## 2. Negative Discipline

Under negative discipline, penalties are used to force the workers to obey rules and regulations. In other words, workers try to adhere to rules and regulations out of fear of warnings, penalties and other forms of punishment. This approach to discipline is called negative or punitive approach.

# Some of the symptoms of general indiscipline can be:

- Absence from work
- Absenteeism
- Abusing customers
- Abusive language toward supervisor
- Assault and fighting among employees
- Causing unsafe working conditions
- Damage to or loss of machinery or materials Dishonesty
- Disloyalty to employer (includes competing with employer, conflict of interest)
- Falsifying company records (including time records, production records)
- Falsifying employment application
- Gambling
- Horseplay
- Incompetence (including low productivity)
- Insubordination
- Leaving place of work (including quitting early)
- Loafing
- Misconduct during a strike
- Negligence
- Obscene or immoral conduct

## Some of the symptoms of general indiscipline can be:

- Negligence
- Obscene or immoral conduct
- Participation in a prohibited strike
- Possession or use of drugs or intoxicants
- Profane or abusive language (not toward supervisor)
- Refusal to accept a job assignment
- Refusal to work overtime
- Sleeping on the job
- Slowdown
- Tardiness
- Theft Threat to or assault of management representative

## **Causes Of Indiscipline:**

- 1. Unfair Management Practices**
- 2. Absence of effective leadership**
- 3. Communication barriers**
- 4. Varying disciplinary measures**
- 5. Defective supervision**
- 6. Inadequate attention to personal problems**
- 7. Victimization**
- 8. Absence of code of conduct**
- 9. Divide and rule policy (obtain secret information from spy)**
- 10. Mis-judgment in promotion and placements**



## Purpose and Objectives of Disciplinary Action on Misbehaved Employees

- To enforce rules and regulations.
- To punish the offender.
- To serve as an example to others to strictly follow rules.
- To ensure the smooth running of the organisation.
- To increase working efficiency.
- To maintain industrial peace.
- To improve working relations and tolerance.
- To develop a working culture which improves performance.

# Code of Discipline

To maintain harmonious relations and promote industrial peace, a Code of Discipline has been laid down which applies to both public and private sector enterprises. It specifies various obligations for the management and the workers with the objective of promoting cooperation between their representatives.

## The Code is based on the following principles:

- There should be no strike or lockout without prior notice.
- No unilateral action should be taken in connection with any industrial matter.
- Employees should not follow go slow tactic.
- No deliberate damage should be caused to a plant or property
- Acts of violations, intimidation and coercion should not be resorted
- The existing machinery for the settlement of disputes should be utilized.
- Actions that disturb cordial relationships should be avoided.

# Employee Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinary procedures are a critical tool for management to succeed.

Correcting employee performance issues is a procedure.

Effective interpersonal communication , written communication, and your management skills list must be utilized to assist your employees. Poorly implemented procedures may negatively impact workplace performance.

1. Issue of charge sheet
2. Consideration of Explanation
3. Suspension pending Enquiry
4. Holding of Enquiry
5. Order of Punishment

## 1. Issue of charge sheet

Once the prima facie case of misconduct is established, the management should proceed to issue a charge sheet to the employee. Charge sheet is merely a notice of the charge and provides the employee an opportunity to explain his conduct.

## 2. Consideration of Explanation

On getting the answer for the charge sheet served, the explanation furnished should be considered and if it is satisfactory, no disciplinary action needs to be taken. On the contrary when the management is not satisfied with the employee's explanation, it can proceed with full-fledged enquiry.

### **3. Suspension pending Enquiry**

In case the charge is grave that is serious, a suspension order may be served on the employee along with the charge sheet. According to the Industrial Employment (Standing Order) Act, 1946, the suspended worker is to be paid a subsistence allowance equal to one-half of his wages for the first ninety days of suspension and three-fourths of wages for the remaining period of suspension if the delay in the completion of disciplinary proceedings is not due to the worker's conduct.

## 4. Holding of Enquiry

An enquiry officer should be appointed to hold the enquiry and a notice to this effect should be given to the concerned worker. The worker should not be denied the chance of explaining himself. Fair opportunity should be given to the worker to cross-examine the management witnesses.

The principles of natural justice can be summarised as follows:

- ✓ Tell the person what he has done
- ✓ Hear Him
- ✓ Give Him a Chance to defend himself

## **5. Order of Punishment**

Disciplinary action can be taken when the misconduct of the employee is proved. While deciding the nature of disciplinary action, the employee's previous record, precedents, effects of the action on other employees, etc. have to be considered.

When the employee feels that the enquiry conducted was not proper and the action taken unjustified, he must be given a chance to make appeal.

The Company will normally adhere to the following progressive disciplinary process:

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| First Offence  | Verbal Caution    |
| Second offence | Written reprimand |
| Third offence  | Suspension        |
| Fourth offence | Dismissal         |

