

I. POLICY:

The Hennepin Healthcare Research Institute (HHRI) believes that regulations for the acceptable conduct of employees are necessary for the orderly operation of any business and for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of all employees.

Therefore, it is the policy of HHRI that the following procedure for disciplinary action be followed to promote consistent action in the event of such violations.

II. PROCEDURE:

Although HHRI supports the theory of corrective action, management retains discretion to take disciplinary action appropriate to the particular circumstances. Violations of rules or policies may result in disciplinary measures that may, depending upon the circumstances and at the discretion of HHRI, include any one or more of the following actions: verbal or written warnings, suspension (with or without pay), or termination. HHRI retains the sole discretion to determine in each circumstance which form of discipline is appropriate, including whether immediate termination is appropriate. These disciplinary measures do not constitute an exclusive list of possible actions and may be taken in any order. They are intended merely as a guide to the employee and are not intended to create a contract or modify the employment-at-will relationship.

It should be noted that the supervisor/manager is not required to go through the entire disciplinary action process if the offense is of a serious nature. However, the supervisor/manager should document all details related to the incident and consult Human Resources for confirmation of any major decisions. If an individual is in the training period, the employee can be terminated at any time during the training period. The supervisor/manager does not have to wait to the end of the training period for the termination. The supervisor/manager is to make certain that the Human Resources Department is consulted before taking final action.

Outlined below are the steps of HHRI's progressive discipline policy and procedures. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling or training; the employee's work record; and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on the organization.

- A. First Step: A verbal warning should be given to the employee for what the supervisor/manager considers a minor offense. The supervisor/manager will inform Human Resources in writing of the conference. If this does not correct the situation within a reasonable length of time, the supervisor/manager should then use the second step of this procedure.
- B. Second Step: The supervisor/manager should give the employee a written warning (Performance Improvement Plan) including a complete description of the event or act as applicable. Included should be such details as time, place, circumstances and effect of the incident upon the employee's work or fellow employees. This should be used for a second time minor infraction or a first time serious infraction.

1. The supervisor/manager should meet with a representative of the Human Resources Department prior to application of any disciplinary action to assure that the correct disciplinary action is being taken.
  2. The written warning should be discussed with the employee and signed by the employee as being received whether or not the employee agrees with the content.
  3. A copy of the Performance Improvement Plan (written warning) should be given to the employee and a copy should be placed in the employee's personnel file.
- C. Third Step: If the problem continues to persist, further disciplinary action will be taken which could result in suspension or termination of the employee.
- Suspension  
Suspension may occur in cases of misconduct, insubordination, or other activity which appears to the supervisor/manager to warrant immediate action (such as threatened injury to fellow employees or HHRI property, violation of security, confidentiality, etc.). Suspension may be from one to five (1 to 5) working days (with or without pay) at the supervisor's/manager's discretion.
  - Termination  
Termination occurs when the above steps have been taken and the problem continues.

#### Appeals Process

Employees will have the opportunity to present information to dispute information management has used to issue disciplinary action. The purpose of this process is to provide insight into extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the employee's performance or conduct issues while allowing for an equitable solution.

If the employee does not present this information during any of the step meetings, he or she will have five business days after each of those meetings to present such information.

#### Performance and Conduct Issues Not Subject to Progressive Discipline

Behavior that is illegal is not subject to progressive discipline and may result in immediate termination. Such behavior may be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

Similarly, theft, substance abuse, intoxication, fighting and other acts of violence at work are also not subject to progressive discipline and may be grounds for immediate termination.

#### Documentation

The employee will be provided copies of all progressive discipline documentation, including all PIPs. The employee will be asked to sign copies of this documentation attesting to his or her receipt and understanding of the corrective action outlined in these documents.

Copies of these documents will be placed in the employee's official personnel file.