

CONFRONTING A TROUBLED EMPLOYEE

The Do's of Confronting a Troubled Employee:

- _____ 1. DO - Establish levels of work performance you expect. Set limits that you will tolerate. Determine what is acceptable to you. Make expectations clear.
- _____ 2. DO - Document all absenteeism, tardiness, incidents on the job and poor or impaired job performance. Specific details are necessary.
- _____ 3. DO - Be consistent. Don't play favorites or give special consideration. Treat all employees equally.
- _____ 4. DO - Base the confrontation only on JOB PERFORMANCE (the Company's only concern), not suspected alcoholism, drug addiction, personal problems, etc.
- _____ 5. DO - Be firm; tell the employee that you are there to help. Try to gain trust.
- _____ 6. DO - Be direct; speak with authority. Individual will respect you for this.
- _____ 7. DO - Be prepared to cope with the employee's resistance, defensiveness, and even hostility. One effective method of overcoming resistance is that you talk about your feelings of concern first, then move to impaired job performance. To begin with the job performance usually creates hostility, resistance, and defensiveness.
- _____ 8. DO - Take the responsibility to intervene. Don't be afraid to get involved. Remember it is highly probable that the employee's condition and his/her job performance will progressively deteriorate.
- _____ 9. DO - Provide the information and make the appropriate referral in accordance with Company policy. (If necessary, explain Company's policy without specific reference to alcoholism.) Seek a commitment to referral and improved performance.
- _____ 10. DO - Continue to monitor and document.

The Don'ts of Confronting a Troubled Employee:

- _____ 1. DON'T - Be a diagnostician or counselor. Avoid labeling and personal recommendations.
- _____ 2. DON'T - Make value judgments. Better to say, I don't like this or that, than I think you are wrong. Rely on specific job performance criteria.
- _____ 3. DON'T - Moralize. Avoid the shoulds, shouldn'ts, don't you know betters because these kinds of remarks create hostility.
- _____ 4. DON'T - Ask why the employee does this or that. A why question opens you up to hearing a variety of excuses and sympathy-evoking tactics. The employee is always responsible for behavior and job performance.
- _____ 5. DON'T - Allow the employee to box or corner you. Regardless of any rationalizations, remain firm in your contention that it is the employee's responsibility to improve job performance by seeking help.
- _____ 6. DON'T - Allow the employee to play you against higher management and/or the union - you're not in the middle here - the employee is. **NO UNION EVER PRAISED POOR JOB PERFORMANCE.** Most unions want to combine their efforts with management to help the troubled employee improve job performance.
- _____ 7. DON'T - Make idle disciplinary threats. Follow through with your warnings, and it is best to establish specific check-back dates and expectations.
- _____ 8. DON'T - Discuss drinking unless it occurs on the job.
- _____ 9. DON'T - Cover up for a friend. Your misguided kindness can lead to a serious, even fatal, delay in real help reaching him/her.