INTRODUCTION

The purpose of discipline is to promote the health and safety of all the employees. Without discipline, an employee may be unaware they are doing something wrong or they know they are doing wrong and think they can "get away" with bad behavior. In addition, you as a supervisor can be held accountable for the behavior of the people you supervise, so you want to correct that behavior as soon as you can.

Discipline can be divided up into positive and negative. Positive discipline consists of rewards, such as praise, promotions, or bonuses. Negative discipline consists of punishment such as warnings, demotion, or termination. Negative discipline should be used as a last resort because you don't want your employees to feel under attack.

Discipline programs differ by company, but the important thing is to have a set program that your employees are aware of. Some examples of a discipline program follow.

WHEN TO DISCIPLINE

When negative discipline is used, it's usually because immediate action is needed. Some examples are:
- Tardiness/Absenteeism
- Sexual Harassment
- Not following company safety procedures

Discipline should be administered at the beginning while the problem is still relatively easy to fix.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

One of the most used methods of discipline is "progressive discipline," where each level is more strict:
- Oral Notice
  - Let the employee know that their behavior is incorrect.
  - Be calm and objective.
- Written Notice
  - If the employee fails to improve, send them written notice that their behavior is incorrect and that discipline has escalated.
  - Put the written notice in their employee file.
- Suspension
  - If the employee continues to disobey, suspend the employee.
  - The employee does not come to work and is not paid for the time they are suspended.
- Termination
  - The final resort is termination.

- o Use if a major misconduct problem has occurred or if the other disciplinary steps have had no effect.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline generally involves more planning than negative discipline, but does create faster learning and longer lasting good behavior.

- Hold meetings or have private conversations with your employees so they know what you expect of them.
- Always give feedback so the employees know they are doing things right.
- Only reward behavior you want repeated.

GENERAL NOTES

- Always document the entire discipline process.
    - o This includes any counseling or verbal warnings.
- Discipline in private.
- Be specific.
- Focus on the behavior, not the person.
- Help the employee develop solutions.
- The level of discipline should match the severity of the offense.
    - o For example, theft may warrant an immediate suspension or termination.
- If you give the employee a time frame in which to correct their behavior, do not escalate the level of
  discipline until the time period is over and they still fail to correct their behavior.

CONCLUSION

Remember, discipline is used to correct behavior, not simply to punish. Positive discipline works best, but sometimes negative discipline is necessary. When you must implement negative discipline, be sure to do so privately and match the level of the behavior with the level of discipline needed.