

## Unit 8 Employee Discipline

Discipline is a systematic method of obtaining obedience from others. In other words, discipline is a condition which allows the employee to show the specific behavior in an organization.

According to Gary Dessler, “Discipline is a procedure that corrects or punishes a subordinate because a rule or procedure has been violated.”

Thus, discipline is an enforcing compliance to control the behavior of employees in an organization.

### **Type of disciplinary problems:**

There are different types of disciplinary problems:

1. Attendance related problems :
  - i. Arriving late for work.
  - ii. Absenteeism
  - iii. Leaving work without permission.
2. Job-behavior related problem:
  - i. Refuse to obey orders (insubordination)
  - ii. Defective work.
  - iii. No-reporting of accidents
  - iv. Drunk on job.
  - v. Destruction of property.
  - vi. Fighting on job.
3. Dishonesty related problems:
  - i. Stealing of organization property.
  - ii. Falsification of information.
  - iii. Hiding defective works.
  - iv. Creating terror in organizational environment.
4. Outside activities related problems:
  - i. Working for other competing organization.
  - ii. Humiliate organization by giving embarrassing speech outside.
  - iii. Involve in other criminal activities outside the organization.

### **Guide lines in administering discipline:**

Following are the guideline that should be followed in administering discipline:

- a. Discipline should be corrective: Discipline is a condition which enforces the employees to show his/her behavior as per the organizational requirement. So while determining the disciplinary action, regarding the activities, it must be helpful in correcting the behavior of individual rather than punishing them.
- b. Discipline should be progressive: Disciplinary action should be progressive in nature. It means hard action should not be taken at once when any disciplinary problems occur in an organization. Typically, progressive disciplinary action begins with an oral warning

and proceeds through written warning, suspension and only in the most serious cases, dismissal.

- c. Discipline should follow the “HOT STOVE” rule (Douglas McGregor): Usually, disciplinary actions generate resentment (anger) on employees. So hot stove rule should be followed while administering discipline. They are:
  - i. The person breaching the discipline should be affected immediately.
  - ii. The warning related to disciplinary actions should be clearly stated.
  - iii. The action must be fair and is consistent for same type of disciplinary offences.
  - iv. The disciplinary action must be impersonal. It must be focus on problem not a person and whoever the person action should be same.

**Disciplinary Actions: (Process/Steps of managing discipline):**

Following are the steps followed in managing discipline:

- a. Oral warning: It is a soft disciplinary action taken by any organization. Under this, employees are warned orally about the problem caused by him/her and its effect on organizational setting.
- b. Written warning: The second step in progressive discipline is the written warning. It is a formal stage of the discipline procedure where written document related to the problem caused by employee is provided. When oral warning does not correct the employee’s behavior written warning is give to him/her.
- c. Suspension: Suspension is a short duration layoff without pay. It prohibits the workers to work in an organization.
- d. Demotion: Demotion is a reduction of job level or job grade along with reduction in usual pay. It is a permanent type of disciplinary action which demoralizes the problem employee. It is a constant punishment to the demoted employee and hence has broad implication. Usually, demotion is done to avoid dismissal.
- e. Pay cut: It means reducing in usual pay or the other benefits. This approach usually has a demoralizing effect on the employee, but is has been suggested as a rational action by management if only other alternative is dismissal.
- f. Dismissal: Dismissal means lay off the employees permanently. It is ultimate disciplinary punishment taken by a management. It should be used only for the most serious offenses that seriously interfere with a department or the organizational problems.