

## **SAMPLE DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICIES**

NOTE: I generally avoid the term “grievance” because of its use in union contracts. Some employers like to use the phrase “problem solving procedure” rather than “dispute resolution procedure,” and, either phrase is quite acceptable. The various levels of any procedure should be tailored to meet the company’s organization; thus, for some companies the issue will be referred to Human Resources or other designated person(s) within the organization. These samples range from a short, very informal policy to a more formal procedure. They can be modified to reflect the individual company’s style, etc.

### **SAMPLE 1:**

The Company believes that the work conditions, wages, and benefits it offers to its employees are competitive with those offered by other employers in this area and in this industry. If you have a concern about work conditions or compensation, you are strongly encouraged to voice these concerns openly and directly to your immediate supervisor. If you are not comfortable going to your immediate supervisor, feel free to talk to any other supervisor or manager.

Our experience has shown that when employees deal openly and directly with each other, the work environment can be excellent, communications can be clear, and attitudes can be positive.

Because the Company does not have a union, you can talk over any matter of concern with any supervisor or manager. Please remember – don’t keep a problem inside. There can’t be a solution if no one is aware that you have a problem.

### **SAMPLE 2:**

The Company is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response from the Company’s supervisors and management.

The Company strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Supervisors, managers, and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism.

If an employee disagrees with how an established rule of conduct, policy, or practice, has been applied to him/her, the employee can express this concern through the problem solving procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with the Company in a reasonable, business like manner, or for using the problem solving procedure. Employees are encouraged to make use of the following problem solving procedure.

If a situation occurs when an employee believes that a condition of employment or a decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step.

1. The employee presents the issue to the employee's immediate supervisor promptly after the incident occurs. If this supervisor is unavailable or the employee is not comfortable contacting that person, the employee may present the problem to the next-level supervisor.
2. The supervisor receiving the employee's issue promptly responds to the employee (after consulting with appropriate management when necessary) and documents the discussion.
3. The employee presents issue to the next-level supervisor/manager if the employee is not satisfied with the initial response.
4. The next-level supervisor/manager reviews the facts and issue and responds to the employee and any supervisor(s) who have already reviewed the issue.
5. The employee presents the issue to the Vice-President in writing if the employee is not satisfied with the response.
6. The Vice-President reviews and considers the facts and issues. The Vice-President informs the employee of the decision. The Vice-President has full authority to make any adjustment deemed appropriate to resolve the issue. The Vice-President's decision is the final decision.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual issues and problems can employees and management develop confidence in each other.

### **SAMPLE 3:**

The Company wants to provide each employee fair and impartial treatment. Therefore, it has the following procedure available to any employee who believes that a

policy or practice has not been fairly applied to that employee. Employees are encouraged to use this procedure so that issues can be addressed promptly and in a business-like manner. Nothing in this procedure alters the at-will nature of the employment relationship. This procedure does not apply to complaints about unlawful discrimination or harassment, which should be made in the manner specified in the Company's policies against unlawful discrimination or harassment.

**First Step – Immediate Supervisor:** In order to minimize the possibility of misunderstandings or loss of information, an employee should discuss any issue with the employee's immediate supervisor as soon as possible (and generally no more than 5 working days) after the employee becomes aware of the issue. The supervisor will make every effort to investigate the matter and respond quickly (and generally no more than 3 working days after being contacted by the employee, unless additional time is required under the circumstances).

**Second Step – Human Resources:** If an employee does not receive a satisfactory answer or resolution from the immediate supervisor, the employee should promptly (and generally no more than 5 working days) give a written description of the issue to the Human Resources representative. The Human Resources representative will schedule a meeting with the employee to provide the employee an opportunity to more fully present and discuss the issue. Following that meeting (and generally no more than 3 working days, unless additional time is required under the circumstances), the Human Resources representative will provide the employee with a response to the issue.

**Third Step – President:** If an employee is not satisfied with the decision at the second step of this procedure, the employee can give a written request to the President (or the President's designee) for a meeting. The written request should describe the facts and issues, including as much information as possible regarding dates, times, what happened, and potential witnesses. The President (or the President's designee) will respond to the employee within 10 working days (unless additional time is required under the circumstances) of receiving the employee's written request. The President's decision will be the final resolution of the issue.