

Oral and Written Reprimands

1. Disciplining employees is difficult for most supervisors, but it is necessary sometimes. When you need to reprimand an employee, orally or in writing, make sure you are prepared.
 - a. Have a witness
 - b. Know ahead of time what you will say
 - c. Be brief, decisive, succinct, and direct; this is not a time for soft-peddling, over-explaining, feeling defensive, or changing your message in reaction to the employee's anger, sadness, or fear
 - d. Prepare for push back
 - e. Do not be dissuaded by the employee
 - f. If the employee is in a represented (by the union) position and asks for a representative to be present, stop the meeting and allow the employee to get a shop steward or another person to sit in the meeting
 - g. Remember: this is a meeting you called to convey a message; don't let it turn into anything else
 - h. If necessary, become a broken record: you did this, it's not OK, you need to do this, yes I am disciplining you, yes I hear you
 - i. Don't expect the employee to leave the meeting feeling good-s/he's just been disciplined
 - j. When/if the meeting becomes unproductive, end it
2. When issuing a written reprimand, read and discuss it with the employee in the same fashion as you would an oral reprimand.
3. Every reprimand should
 - a. Make clear it is an oral or a written reprimand
 - b. Describe what the employee is doing wrong
 - c. Tell the employee to stop
 - d. Explain how to do it right
 - e. Warn the employee that continuing to do it wrong will result in additional discipline, up to and including discharge
4. Example:

Mary, **you are still coming in late every day**. I've told you that you need to be here on time; in fact, I've offered to change your work hours. **At 7:00 am you need to be at the front desk, ready to work**. **It's not OK** to pull into the parking lot at 7:00, come into the building, go start coffee in the kitchen, make coffee, chat with your friends and finally sit down and **start working 5 to 15 minutes after 7:00**.

Apparently my comments haven't made a difference, so **this counts as an oral reprimand**. I hope it gets your attention and causes you to take your start time more seriously. **But if you keep coming in late—if you aren't at your desk, ready to work at 7:00—the discipline will increase, up to and including discharge.**

5. Oral reprimands should be documented in your desk file and copied to Human Resources.
6. Written reprimands should be copied to Human Resources.
 7. Generally, you should refer to reprimands in employee evaluations.
For example: In the fall Mary had a problem getting to work on time. I reprimanded her, and the problem was resolved OR but the problem continues.
8. As with all discipline actions, please work with or at least notify HR of any reprimands you issue.
9. Oral reprimands for AFSCME employees should be documented on the form below.

MEMORANDUM

(This applies only to members of the AFSCME bargaining unit.)

TO: Title:

DEPT:

FROM: Title:

DEPT:

DATE:

SUBJECT: Record of Oral Reprimand for Event on

This memorandum is a record of the oral reprimand I gave you for (describe incident). It is being given to you and **shall not** be placed in your official personnel file.

Outline all behavior that must be improved.

Outline action steps to make improvements.

My signature below means only that my supervisor explained this memorandum to me and gave me a copy of it.

Employee Signature

Date