

6. Types of Disciplinary Action

(a) Informal Action

(i) Counselling

Although, Counselling is not a formal measure in terms of the disciplinary process, it is an important element of managerial responsibility and action. Counselling provides a process which enables managers to prevent future misconduct and/or place the employee on notice that his behaviour does not conform to rules which have been established. Counselling allows the manager to resolve potential problems before the employee's behaviour becomes of serious concern. There are three basic components of a counselling session. These include:

- informing the employee of the standards of behaviour which are expected. This should be explained as explicitly and precisely as possible.
- if the employee's current behaviour is unacceptable, he/she should be informed and alternate behaviour should be suggested.
- informing the employee of the disciplinary consequence of any future breach of the established standards of behaviour.

Counselling also allows the manager to explore the reasons for the undesirable behaviour. It should be taken as an opportunity to explore underlying or personal problems which may not be disciplinary in nature.

(ii) Oral Reprimand

Oral reprimands are considered as an informal disciplinary measure which are applied to relatively minor infractions. An oral reprimand is considered an informal procedure because it does not become part of the employee's record. However, managers should take note of such occurrences for future reference. In such cases, managers should maintain their own detailed records relating to the conversation with the employee concerned.

(b) Formal Action

(i) Written Reprimand

This is considered the first formal stage in the disciplinary process since the notice becomes part of the employee's appraisal file. A written reprimand would normally apply if there is a continuation of minor infractions, or, for an act of misconduct