

purpose is corrective, and the disciplinary action is the means. Management should never be open to the charge of taking disciplinary action for its own sake, as mere punishment; but equally management should never shrink, or even appear to shrink, from disciplinary action when it is necessary to improve the efficiency of the individual and/or the department.

The purview of discipline

Discipline applies to misconduct, the failure to comply with the standards governing the personal behaviour of employees of the Department. When an individual lacks the ability to perform his assigned duties, or is not able, through mental or physical incapacity, to achieve proper levels of performance, disciplinary actions cannot be taken. Although other types of action may be necessary, neither incompetency nor incapacity falls within the purview of disciplinary procedures.

Breaches as possible symptoms of underlying difficulties

Supervisors and authorized managers should also realize that some breaches of discipline may be the symptoms of more serious domestic or job-related difficulties. In evaluating each case of misconduct, the supervisor or authorized manager should investigate the context in which infractions occur to ensure that organizational problems, job tensions, inequitable distributions of workloads, threats to job security or other factors are not the underlying sources of an employee's breaches of conduct. Such circumstances within the working environment may influence the degree of disciplinary action taken by the supervisor. Employees whose unsatisfactory behaviour can be attributed to physical or emotional problems should be encouraged to seek professional advice and treatment. The goal of disciplinary action is the creation of a healthy, productive working atmosphere for all members of the organization.

Assessing appropriate disciplinary action

The appropriateness of disciplinary actions depends upon the nature of the offence, the attendant circumstances, and the frequency with which infractions have occurred previously. Consider-