

HANDLING PERSONNEL ISSUES ON OUTLYING EXPERIMENT STATIONS

Or

How to Manage as an HR Department
of One!

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RCAS Statement of Principles

We (the members of the Research Center Administrators Society) recognize our responsibilities;

- to protect our professional and academic rights, and to keep members apprised of regulations, policies and procedures which affect the conduct of their research and educational programs and management of their research facilities.
- to represent our members fairly and accurately in all communications, with careful attention to issues of academic freedom, rights in intellectual property, and policies.
- to clearly enunciate our societies' policies and practices, and to accept only those terms and conditions with which we can assure compliance.

We recognize our responsibility to our local, state and national communities to address critical issues in our research and educational programs and any issue that may affect the operation of our research facilities.

We adhere to the principles, policies and procedures of our member institutions and promote understanding of the same among our faculties and staffs.

We understand the importance of recognizing the potential for conflicts of interest in the performance of our duties and resolving these issues according to our member institutions' policies.

Approved September 25, 2005
RCAS Executive Committee

Know Your Organization's Resources

- ▣ Human Resources
- ▣ Legal
- ▣ EEO (EEOC, etc.)
- ▣ EAP

Know Your Local Resources

- ▣ Medical facilities and health care providers
- ▣ Mental health care providers
- ▣ Emergency contacts for your employees
- ▣ Law enforcement

Know Your Organization's Basic Rules

- ▣ FLSA (hours of work, overtime requirements, etc.)
- ▣ FMLA
- ▣ Discrimination/Harassment
- ▣ ADA
- ▣ Workers' Comp
- ▣ Alcohol and Other Drugs
- ▣ Workplace Violence

What You Need to Tell Every Employee

- ▣ These are our policies.
- ▣ These are my expectations for you.
- ▣ Here's how you are doing.

Leadership Basics

- ▣ Share information
- ▣ Lead by example
- ▣ Get people involved
- ▣ Listen to people's concerns
- ▣ Take action to show you care
- ▣ Tell people what they are doing right
- ▣ Focus on solutions, not problems
- ▣ Deal with mistakes in private (focus on the issue, not the person)
- ▣ Use mistakes to teach
- ▣ Think beyond the moment

“There are two ways of exerting one's strength: one is pushing down, the other is pulling up.”
Booker T. Washington

Address Concerns as They Arise

- ▣ Catch “little” problems before they turn into “big” problems

- ▣ Use a C.A.L.M. approach
 - C= clarify the issues
 - A= address the problem
 - L= listen to the other side
 - M= manage your way to resolution

Be Fair, Consistent, and Timely

- ▣ Hold all employees to the same standards
- ▣ Follow the progressive discipline model
- ▣ Act promptly
- ▣ Before you act, ask yourself:
 - Is it the truth?
 - Is it fair to all?
 - Is it free from harm?
 - Am I proud to do it?

Document, Document, Document

- ▣ State the expectations that are not being met
- ▣ Specify failings in terms of performance or behavior
 - Describe behavior rather than using a label (i.e., “bad attitude”) or applying a medical term (“you seem depressed”)
 - Focus on action rather than intent
 - Don’t generalize or use absolutes (i.e., “always”)
- ▣ Cite prior corrective counseling
- ▣ Note expectations going forward (general and specific with time frames)
- ▣ Indicate consequences if problems continue

Documentation, cont.

- ▣ Don't use legal labels
- ▣ Don't use “proxy adjectives” that suggest bias (i.e., “resistant to change” or “too emotional”)
- ▣ Don't use hedges (“it appears” or “it would seem”)

Stay Connected to “Headquarters”

- ▣ Help staff feel part of the larger organization
- ▣ Visit the main campus on a routine basis
- ▣ Ask reps from the main campus to come to you
- ▣ Be sure information from administration and other official sources gets to your employees

Take Advantage of Training Opportunities

- ▣ Remind central offices of your needs
- ▣ Invest in distance learning technologies
- ▣ Provide at least two on-site training classes each year
- ▣ Support staff development, both personal and professional

Identify and Deal with the “Troubled Employee”

- Observe the behavior, noting signs of impairment such as slurred speech, altered gait, lack of coordination, inappropriate affect .
- Note if there is an odor of alcohol.
(What if there is an odor of alcohol but no observable impairment?)
- Have another management person observe the behavior.
- Contact your HR rep.
- Confront the employee with the observed facts.
- Do not allow the employee to perform a safety sensitive function or to drive if you think they are impaired.
- Remove the employee from the workplace by arranging transportation to his/her home.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action after consultation with HR.

“Troubled Employee,” cont.

- Stage I--Early Potential for Violence
 - Dehumanizing other people: name-calling, racial insults, or other verbal abuse, or sexual harassment
 - Challenging authority: insubordination
 - Regularly being argumentative, alienating customers or co-workers
 - Unusual or strange behavior: paranoid comments, social isolation, fixation on violence, angry responses to situations

- Stage II--Escalated Potential for Violence
 - Ignoring company policies and procedures
 - Stealing from the company or co-workers
 - Making threats verbally, in writing, by e-mail, or by voice mail
 - Blaming others for all problems
 - Destruction of property

- Stage III--Potential for Violence Is Realized
 - Displaying or brandishing a gun, knife, grenade
 - Punching, kicking, slapping
 - Committing assault, arson, or threatening suicide
 - Stalking

“Troubled Employee,” cont.

- ▣ For our purposes, a threat or act of violence shall include, but not be limited to, any act or gesture intended to harass or intimidate another person, any act or gesture likely to damage company property, or any act or gesture likely to leave another person injured or fearing injury.
- ▣ All employees are responsible for helping to maintain a violence-free workplace. To that end, each employee is required to govern himself or herself accordingly. In addition, any employee experiencing an act or threat of violence is asked to report such act or threat to his or her immediate supervisor and/or another designated manager.
- ▣ Each act or threat of violence will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken. Any such act or threat may lead to discipline, up to and including termination.

In Closing . . .

- ▣ Don't hesitate to ask for help
- ▣ Don't ignore trouble
- ▣ Live by the "platinum rule"
"Do unto others as they would have you do unto them."