




Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Policy Title: Employee Problem Solving Process	Policy Number: 2.9
Effective: October 30, 2005	
Supersedes: 1988 Rules and Regulations #32, p.36	
Approval: 	Page 1 of 4

1.0 Scope

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full-time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Salaried |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> Union |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary/Contract | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Contractors |

Employees who are covered under the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement will follow the standards as contained in their respective contracts if this policy conflicts with the language in the contract.

2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 To resolve employee/management conflict and to provide a process for formal discussion for an employee who feels that he or she has been personally adversely affected by the interpretation, application or administration of the Human Resource Policies and Procedures contained herein excluding Separation of Employment (3.13) and Reduction in Force (3.14).
- 2.2 These complaint procedures may NOT be used to replace and/or supplement procedures already defined in other City policies such as, but not inclusive of, the procedures outlined in the Employee Discrimination and Harassment policy (2.2) or Performance Management System policy (5.5).

DISCLAIMER

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3.0 Policy

The City of Ann Arbor will strengthen communication between and among employees and management through formal mutual discussion of questions and concerns and identification of solutions to work-related problems. For complaints regarding particularly sensitive issues, the employee may choose not to follow the steps outlined in this policy, but instead consult directly with a Service Area Administrator or Human Resources Services.

4.0 Responsibility

4.1 Management Responsibilities

- A. Support the use of the problem-solving process by being open and receptive to employee questions and concerns and encouraging employees to use the process without reprisal.
- B. Seek the advice and counsel of Human Resources Services.
- C. At the end of review, conduct an independent and timely investigation, not to exceed thirty (30) days from the notification of the employee's concern. Responses by the Service Unit Manager or higher must be in writing to the employee and a copy retained by Human Resources Services.
- D. Take action to implement changes and resolutions resulting from problem-solving meetings
- E. Explain the reasons for management decisions and seek employee understanding.
- F. Attempt to protect confidentiality.
- G. Ensure application of City of Ann Arbor values and consistent treatment of all employees in decision-making process.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- A. Address concerns with management in a reasonable time frame, typically within two weeks of the incident or issue of concern.

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- B. Meet with immediate supervisor and other appropriate management including Human Resources Services as soon as possible to discuss and seek assistance with work related questions, concerns and problems.
- C. To ensure clarity of issues, concerns and problems to be addressed, the employee must prepare a statement of the question, concern or problem and desired outcome prior to a problem-solving meeting, usually in a simple and direct letter or memorandum, electronic or written, when seeking resolution beyond the immediate supervisor.

5.0 Procedures

- 5.1 Employees are encouraged to first work with their immediate supervisor to resolve work-related problems. If an understanding is not reached, the employee may request review at the next level of management. If an understanding is still not reached, the employee may progress to the final step being the Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations.
- 5.2 Human Resources Services is available to employees for confidential advice and counsel at any step in the problem solving process. Employees are free to work with any member of the Human Resources Services staff with whom they feel most comfortable. Human Resources Services will ensure the problem-solving process proceeds appropriately and that adequate investigation and deliberation of the issues are conducted.
- 5.3 The progression of the problem-solving process may be modified at the sole discretion of the City, reducing the number of steps for resolution where the origin of the issue, the service unit involved, or the content and scope of the issue make that progression impractical.
- 5.4 Due to the emphasis on communication and internal problem-solving, attendance at employee problem-solving meetings will be limited to employees of the City.
- 5.5 An employee's attendance at a problem-solving meeting will be with pay. Other time spent in formulating or preparing a statement should not interfere with the regular work schedule or responsibilities.
- 5.6 The employee, management and Human Resources Services will attempt to maintain the confidentiality of discussions and documentation.

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- 5.7 For issues that are reviewed at any level above the immediate supervisor, both employee and manager will acknowledge the problem resolution and/or completion of the problem-solving process by jointly signing a summary memorandum with a copy going to Human Resources Services.

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