

10 Tips for Preventing Grievances

1. **Be a role model.** Create a climate of trust, cooperation and good communication in the workplace. Adhere to personnel policies and act professionally at all times. Don't abuse your power.
2. **Set clear expectations.** Let employees know what you want from them in terms of quality performance and appropriate workplace behavior. Train new managers so that they exercise their authority properly.
3. **Actively engage.** Interact with your employees on a regular basis. Know what they're doing and what's going on in the workplace.
4. **Stay accessible.** Maintain an open door policy so employees can discuss and resolve problems without resorting to grievances. Be a good listener; don't take things personally.
5. **Keep everyone in the loop.** Communicate with employees about changes in policies, organizational structure, or work requirements and explain the "why" behind these decisions.
6. **Give timely and objective performance feedback.** Praise successes and be specific about any improvement that's needed. Follow-up with corrective conversations so that the annual evaluation isn't a surprise.
7. **Know the contract.** Be sure you're familiar with current contract language; follow procedural requirements and timeframes.
8. **Discipline wisely and fairly.** Remember that the goal of effective discipline is correction, not punishment. Apply rules and consequences consistently, explain clearly the basis for any discipline, and avoid the appearance of favoritism. Be sure to document everything.
9. **Work with the union.** Develop a cordial and constructive relationship with union representatives; they will be less likely to defend bad employee behavior.
10. **Ask for help.** Consult with management or labor relations folks early in the process about past precedent, gray areas, or difficult issues.