

Successfully Managing Personnel Problems

By Steve Prziborowski, Battalion Chief

Eight steps to a successful counseling session:

1. Friendly greeting
2. Briefly state the problem
3. Employee talks, you listen
4. You talk, employee listens
5. State the rules for desired behavior
6. Create an action plan (if needed)
7. Review with feedback from the employee
8. Closing, make it positive

Levels of Progressive Discipline:

Preventative Action

1. Establishing goals and expectations
2. Training
3. Coaching

Informal Discipline:

1. Verbal counseling
2. Written counseling

Formal Discipline:

1. Letter of reprimand
2. Reduction in pay
3. Suspension
4. Demotion
5. Termination

Major issues needing to be addressed immediately:

1. Issues relating to not treating others with respect and courtesy
 - a. Harassment
 - b. Rudeness
 - c. Violence
 - d. Inappropriate behavior
2. Issues affecting customer service
3. Issues affecting service delivery
 - a. Apparatus related / readiness
4. Issues relating to character traits
 - a. Lying
 - b. Incompetence
 - c. Poor performance

General ideas when dealing with personnel problems:

1. Separate the person from the behavior. The behavior is typically bad, not the person.
2. 95% of our problems are behavior, 5% of our problems are technical. Most people will try to make you believe it is a technical issue, not a behavior issue.
3. If it is one of the four (4) major issues above needing to be addressed immediately, then do so!