

# POLICY MANUAL

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**Subject:** Corrective Counseling  
(Formerly Progressive Discipline)

**Effective Date:** 01/01/03

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**Initiated By:** Cinde Stewart Freeman  
Chief Quality Officer

**Approved By:** Wm Boyd Smith  
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**Review Dates:**

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## POLICY:

Cumberland Heights, in order to achieve its mission statement, relies on the accurate, timely, and appropriate functioning of its employees in all aspects of their duties. When this does not occur, coaching and training are the first option. If these do not resolve the issue, Cumberland Heights has established a path of corrective counseling to assist employees with coming into compliance with expected standards as well as to deal with those who do not. Individual employee circumstances and events must always be evaluated on a case by case basis with the appropriate supervising executive manager and/or Human Resources. It is also duly noted that Cumberland Heights is an at-will employer and is not required to go through any particular progressive discipline process with its employees. In addition, Cumberland Heights has no obligation to follow a particular order of disciplinary steps or to go through each step outlined. This policy is a **guide** for management staff.

Corrective Counseling may include a verbal warning, written warning, probation, suspension or termination of employment, depending on the nature and severity of the issue. It should be noted that there may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

## PROCEDURE:

**Corrective Counseling may consist of the following when applicable:**

1. During the initial employment appointment with the Human Resources Director, each new employee receives a copy of the Employee Handbook/Policies & Procedures Manual. Each new employee is asked to sign an employee acknowledgement form as a statement of receipt of and agreement to read the Employee Handbook.
2. Within the first week of hire, the supervisor or designee meets with the employee to review the job description, the expectations of the position and any other relevant information pertaining to the position. The employee is asked to sign a copy of the job description. A copy of the signed job description is provided to the employee and the original is forwarded to the Human Resources Director for filing in the personnel record.
3. Supervisors meet with employees on a regular basis, both individually and as a group, to provide feedback about performance, to inform employees of changes in job duties and/or expectations. Records of these meetings should be documented and maintained on file by the supervisor.

4. When an event or a pattern of behavior occurs which demonstrates that an employee is not performing the required job functions, is performing at an inadequate or incomplete level, or is omitting required functions, the supervisor brings this to the attention of the employee in an informal setting for a verbal consultation. Reasons for the performance issues as well as suggestions on how to correct the issues are explored. Records of these meetings should be documented and maintained on file by the supervisor.
5. Should the pattern of behavior continue and not be resolved by training and/or coaching, corrective counseling may be instituted. The following general guidelines should be followed:
  - a) consultation with the Human Resources Director should occur whenever possible prior to a disciplinary action;
  - b) documentation should be reviewed with the Human Resources Director prior to review with the employee whenever possible;
  - c) the supervisor should have another manager, the supervising executive manager, or the Human Resources Director present when meeting with an employee for any disciplinary action above a Verbal Consultation.
6. As the first step of the formal progressive discipline, the employee may be given a **Verbal Warning** which is a written document that provides details for the corrective counseling. The employee's supervisor brings the conduct or performance issue to the employee's attention, verifies the employee's understanding of the standards, suggests how the problem may be remedied, and warns the employee against further occurrences.
7. The supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the Verbal Warning and asks for the employee's signature to note acknowledgement of the Verbal Warning. An employee's signature on the document does not mean that the employee is in agreement with the Verbal Warning; rather, the signature is verification that the document has been reviewed with the employee. Should an employee refuse to sign such documentation, the manager will note this. The employee is encouraged to consider the corrective action and submit written comments that will be attached to the Verbal Warning. The Verbal Warning, along with any attachments, is forwarded to the Human Resources Director and placed in the employee's personnel record. It should be noted that the original corrective action will be submitted to Human Resources within 24 hours with or without the employee's signatures.
8. If the same or separate issue occurs, the employee may receive a **Written Warning** that refers to any Verbal Warning(s), states the nature of the problem, required corrective action and possible consequences if the problem is not corrected. The Written Warning is a written document that typically denotes either a continuation of a pattern of substandard performance or a single incident that is deemed a serious breach in performance. The formal Written Warning may be accompanied by other measures, including Investigative Administrative Leave, Probation and/or Suspension.
9. The supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the Written Warning and again asks for the employee's signature as noted in item #7 above. Another supervisor, the supervising executive manager, or the Human Resources Director should be present.
10. **Investigative Administrative Leave** may occur when further investigation of a situation may be required. The employee will be placed on leave with pay for 1-5 days. Upon return to work, the employee will be informed of the course of action to be taken, which may include disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
11. Should the pattern of behavior continue, the next step in corrective counseling may include either **Probation or Suspension** as determined appropriate by the supervisor and the supervising executive manager with consultation from the Human Resources Director.

12. **Probationary** status may be in periods of 30-90 days. Specific conditions for completing the probation must be given within the formal Probation documentation. In addition, the employee is notified that eligibility for salary increases is frozen until the probationary period is successfully completed. Finally, it should be noted that the improvement in performance must be maintained after Probation is completed or further disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will occur.
13. **Suspension** without pay may occur for a period of 1-7 days. This is again accompanied by written documentation regarding the reason for the suspension, the improvements that are required, and what will happen if the improvement does not occur or is not maintained upon return to work.
14. The process of meeting with the employee, reviewing the document, encouraging comments, and obtaining the employee's signature in the case of Probation and/or Suspension is the same as item #7. Another supervisor, the supervising executive manager, or the Human Resources Director should be present.
15. **Termination** is a final step in corrective counseling. The goal of corrective counseling is to provide the employee with the opportunity to correct performance or conduct issues and become a productive member of Cumberland Heights' team. If, however, issues persist despite corrective counseling, the employee may be dismissed from continued employment. A formal documentation of the reasons for the termination, the actions taken to date, the failure to improve, and any other relevant information is documented. A review of termination with the supervising executive and the Human Resources Director should occur prior to notifying the employee, if at all possible.
16. It is not required that all five steps (i.e. Verbal Warning, Written Warning, Probation, Suspension, Termination) occur or be in sequence. Use of any of these steps is dependent on the individual employee, the current circumstances or event, prior performance, etc. There are certain types of employee issues that may warrant termination without going through the steps outlined above.
17. Additionally, conduct outside the workplace including, but not limited to, a violation of the law and/or actions that may involve material risk to organizational operations and/or potential damage to Cumberland Heights' reputation/good standing in the community may rise to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
18. Referral to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) may occur at any time during the corrective counseling process. The employee may be asked to sign a release for the employer to speak to the EAP. Cumberland Heights may discuss with the EAP the reason for an employee's referral to the EAP, whether or not an employee is following the recommendations of the EAP, and/or any relevant work restrictions or safety concerns. Cumberland Heights does not require, nor does it wish to know, the personal concerns, medical issues, or mental health issues of its employees, outside of the impact on the employee's ability to safely and fully perform their responsibilities at work.