Steps for the Verbal Warning

1. Verbal warning should follow previous coaching/feedback session with employee.

2. Complete Disciplinary Documentation Form if appropriate
   a. Collect facts and review with supervisor; secure approval.
   b. Review facts with Human Resources (HR) before acting.

3. Schedule a private meeting with employee. If you choose to, a witness from management may be included.

4. Have with you documented facts/examples.

5. Present facts of the situation.

6. Ask the employee for his/her response.

7. Listen. Do not argue.

8. Explain that the meeting serves as an oral warning.

9. Explain the goals the employee needs to meet to have acceptable performance.
   a. Example: Arrive at work on time.
   b. Example: Greet the public with a smile and cordial, helpful conversation.
   c. Example: Meet deadlines

10. Decide together what steps the employee can take to correct the issue.

11. Set clear expectations and time frame.
    a. Example: You are expected to arrive at work on time starting tomorrow and maintain that behavior consistently
    b. Example: You are expected to complete projects error free and on time. We will review on a weekly basis until further notice.

12. Explain that failing to meet the goals will result in further disciplinary action in accordance with University procedures.

13. Prepare a summary of the meeting and the actions to be taken.

14. Send the summary by email to the employee (or provide them with a hard copy).
    a. Provide a hard copy of the summary for any employee who does not access email.
    b. Obtain acknowledgement of e-mail, or signature, from employee.
    c. If employee refuses to sign, acknowledge refusal on the document.

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15. Send copy to Human Resources.

16. Record in the employee’s next performance evaluation that the discussion occurred and note improvements if relevant.

Frequently asked questions:
1. How many incidents need occur before the employee receives an oral warning?
   a. Depending on the situation, a verbal warning usually follows a coaching session with the employee.
   b. If the behavior does not change after the coaching session, the oral warning is probably appropriate
   c. Refer to “Disciplinary Actions, Guidelines” in the UNO HR Library.

2. How long after the next incident should the employee receive the verbal warning?
   a. Promptly. As soon as possible after the incident. Do not wait a week.
   b. Delaying to hold the discussion dilutes the importance of the issue and memories fade.

3. What if there is more than one issue?
   a. Discuss multiple infractions when appropriate and timely.
   b. Attendance, lateness, work rules, and performance-related concerns may be happening at once.
   c. An employee who is late and has attendance problems may very well have work performance deficiencies.

4. Does the supervisor have to witness the incident?
   a. It is best practice for the supervisor to witness the incident.
   b. Accept information from other sources when appropriate and when the facts can be substantiated.

5. What if the employee becomes emotional: cries, becomes angry?
   a. Stick to facts and dates—deal with the issue at hand, e.g., tardiness, productivity.
   b. You are not criticizing the employee, but the behavior, such as tardiness, quality of work, productivity, deadlines...
   c. Not addressing these issues in an employee is unfair to the others who are properly meeting work expectations.

6. How do I make the employee responsible for his or her actions?
   a. Involve the employee in finding answers. Have the employee evaluate the behavior which causes the tardiness.
   b. Dictating the actions to be taken is not always appropriate.
   c. Establish a reasonable level of assistance from the supervisor.
   d. Consider a refresher training session for a work performance issue.

7. How long is the oral warning in effect?
   a. The warning is in effect for 18 months.
   b. The employee may request its removal after 18 months