

General Guide for Receiving a Respectful Workplace Complaint

This information is intended to be used as a general guide and its application will depend on the circumstances of each complaint.

Opening

- Thank the employee for coming forward and acknowledge that discussing these types of issues can be a difficult thing to do. Explain that what is discussed will be taken very seriously.

Find out how you can assist today

- Advise the employee that you can provide them with general information about the policy and investigation process if they are contemplating filing a complaint, and ask if they have a complaint they would like to bring forward.
- If the employee wants to tell you what happened to them at work, but does not want to bring forward a complaint or involve Human Resources (HRS), you must advise them that depending on what information they disclose, you may be obligated to investigate it further.
 - If this is the case, advise the employee that they can also seek support by discussing their concerns with the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). You may also refer them to the information on Reporting Contacts and Post-Incident Supports.

Receiving a complaint

If the employee would like to bring forward a complaint, please ensure the following is communicated:

Confidentiality – Advise the employee that information shared is kept in the strictest of confidence, but that confidentiality does not mean anonymity. Information may need to be disclosed if necessary as part of investigating the complaint, to take corrective action, or if required by law.

Confidentiality is subject to the following limitations:

1. A supervisor is responsible for addressing every reported issue.
2. The person alleged to have acted inappropriately (the respondent) is informed of the allegations and the identity of the complainant in order to allow for a full response.
3. It may be necessary to interview witnesses.
4. If the situation results in discipline, the disciplined employee has the right to grieve, and any resulting process may involve witnesses, including the complainant.

These limitations on confidentiality should not discourage employees from reporting a concern.

- **Verify whether the concern has been previously reported** – If the employee has reported the complaint previously, but does not know the status, you may offer to follow up with HRS on their behalf.
- **Collect the details of the complaint** – The Complaint Form (Disclosure of Inappropriate Conduct) may be used to document the details of the employee's concerns, either by them or by the person to whom the complaint is reported. **Note: All allegations involving sexual harassment must be documented on the disclosure form and reported to HRS by the person receiving the complaint.**
- **At a minimum, the following general details need to be collected:**
 - Employee's name, office/branch and the best way to reach them
 - Name and office/branch of the respondent(s)
 - General nature of the concern(s)
 - Confirm the employee's preference for formal or informal resolution

Next steps

○ Advise the complainant what to expect:

- A representative from Human Resource Services (HRS) will contact them.
- HRS will ask more specific questions in order to better understand the circumstances of the complaint and determine what actions need to be taken. Questions may include more information about specific incidents that they have experienced, approximate timeframes, and witnesses. It is understood that it can be difficult for the complainant to share this information, but they should be advised that it will assist in ensuring that their concerns are best addressed.
- Advise the employee that if they do not hear back from HRS within five to seven business days, they may contact you directly (provide your email address) and you will follow-up with HRS on their behalf.

Closing

- Offer the complainant the contact information for the EFAP. Let them know that this is a voluntary, confidential counselling service offered free of charge to employees and their families.
- Once again acknowledge that it can be very difficult coming forward with a complaint, and thank them for reaching out. Assure them that their concerns are taken very seriously and will be handled with the strictest of confidence.