

# ***PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE***

## ***Adapted from material from the American Arbitration Association Department of Education and Training***

Except in an extreme situation involving a major offense, an employee should not be discharged for a first offense. Instead, an employee should be subjected to “progressive discipline,” under which an employee receives a series of increasingly severe penalties prior to being discharged for a particular offense. Discharge should be resorted to only where previous efforts and less severe disciplinary measures have failed to correct the employee’s behavior. The purpose of progressive discipline is to correct improper conduct and obtain compliance with established rules of proper employee conduct. Progressive discipline necessarily implies effort by the employer to rehabilitate the employee.

### **Normally, the sequence or severity of penalties under progressive discipline is as follows:**

1. Oral counseling (or warning).
2. Verbal warning or reprimand (with notation in personnel file).
3. Written warning or reprimand.
4. Suspension or disciplinary layoff.
5. Discharge.

There is no precise mechanical formula or fixed pattern of penalties for every situation. The degree or severity of the disciplinary action for a first instance of misconduct depends upon the nature of the offense. Each instance of misconduct must be viewed and judged individually, and the disciplinary measure should be designed to bring about correction. The discipline must not be too severe, but it must be sufficient to achieve correction and proper employee behavior for the future.