

## **DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER 01-06**

OFFICE of the CHIEF OF POLICE  
REPLACES/AMENDS: None

DATE: August 17, 2001

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### **PERSONNEL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM**

#### **I. PURPOSE.**

A comprehensive Personnel Early Warning System is an essential component of a well-managed law enforcement agency. The early identification of potential problem employees and a menu of remedial actions not only increase the agency's level of accountability, but also offer employees a better opportunity to comply with the department's values and mission. As such, the following shall serve as an intervention guideline for supervisors and commanders when dealing with a troublesome pattern of abnormal behavior in a subordinate employee.

#### **II. DEFINITIONS.**

Early Warning System - A process whereby supervisory observation generates concern that a subordinate's behavior has negatively changed or is out of norm, and that a continuation of such behavior may pose a potential problem for both the employee and the organization.

#### **III. BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS.**

Personal problems, such as alcohol or drug abuse, divorce or family conflict, gambling, serious illness in family, financial problems, or other concerns can readily degrade an employee's performance and conduct, and ultimately result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. In an effort to avoid being faced with investigating an employee for misconduct related to one of the preceding types of personal problems, supervisors and commanders should be alert for an escalating pattern of less serious behavior affecting the employee's performance, which could possibly be abated through intervention.

Behavioral patterns which may be precursors to serious misconduct, include but are not limited to:

1. Absenteeism.
  - a. Excessive sick leave.
  - b. Leaving work early.
  - c. Excessive tardiness.
2. Work Ethic.
  - a. Frequent breaks.
  - b. Unauthorized absences from duty area.
  - c. Lower Productivity.
  - d. Poor quality of work.
  - e. Mistakes and missed deadlines.
  - f. Inefficient use of time.
3. Workplace safety.
  - a. Accidents on the job.
  - b. Accidents off the job.
  - c. Failure to use good judgement in safety matters.
4. Confusion and Lack of Concentration.
  - a. Difficulty in handling complex assignments.
  - b. Work requires more effort and time.
  - c. Difficulty in understanding instructions.
5. Poor Personal Relationships.
  - a. Wide swings in mood.
  - b. Over-reaction to criticism.
  - c. Unreasonable resentments.
  - d. Borrowing money from co-workers.
  - e. Change in appearance or hygiene.
  - f. Poor morale.
  - g. Uncooperative with authority and co-workers.
6. Grievances.
  - a. Increased use of grievance process.
  - b. Inappropriate grievance claims.
7. Injury and Insurance Claims.
  - a. Higher number of medical claims.
  - b. Claimed injuries that difficult to substantiate.
  - c. Insurance claims for vague illnesses.

It should be noted however that an employee who experiences one or more of these indicators on occasion is performing normally. The key to the proper identification of a problem employee is supervisory recognition of a pattern of negative behavior.

#### IV. DOCUMENTATION AND REVIEW PROCESS.

The compilation of proper and thorough documentation is essential to the development of an accurate performance profile on a potential problem employee. Collected materials may include, performance evaluations, citizen complaints, disciplinary actions, use of force incidents, traffic accidents, supervisory observations, sick time and medical claims, etc.

##### A. Supervisory Review/Documentation

In addition to observing the performance and behavior of subordinate employees on a day to day basis, supervisors should document their observations to substantiate individual performance ratings during the annual evaluation period (Refer General Order 00-19). Specific occurrences such as use of force incidents, traffic accidents, complaints, disciplinary actions, grievances, and sick leave are currently documented in accordance with department policy, and while these should not only influence each employee's performance evaluation, consistent or progressive lapses in behavior or performance from an outside source or via internal documentation/observation should caution supervisors that a potential problem may exist. It shall then be incumbent upon the supervisor to review all documentation relating to the individual's total performance. If, upon completion of this review, the supervisor suspects that a subordinate's performance is suffering due to personal problems, the supervisor shall prepare a written internal report detailing the extent of the problem, supporting facts which may exist, conclusions, and any suggested remedial actions. The report shall then be forwarded to the supervisor's immediate commander.

##### C. Command Review

The appropriate platoon or division commander shall review all supporting data in regard to each potentially problem employee. In the event the commander concurs with the recommendation(s) of the supervisor, he/she will signify agreement by signing off on the memorandum. The Bureau Commander and Chief of Police shall then be apprised of the situation and remedial and/or disciplinary action instituted as necessary.

If the commander disagrees with the supervisor's recommendation(s), the commander will explain his reasons in writing, and submit the information to the next highest level in the chain of command. The process outlined above will then be repeated.

## V. REMEDIAL/DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

Should an employee's personal problems reach the point where they violate the State of Missouri criminal statutes, City of Clayton ordinances, or the department's standards of conduct he/she may be disciplined pursuant to General Order 00-32, "Administration of Discipline." Personal problems of a lesser magnitude or type may be more effectively addressed by supervisory counseling, re-training, or referral to a professional counseling service. The interests of the department as a whole shall be tantamount in each instance of this type and if an accommodation with a troubled subordinate can be worked out to satisfy those interests, the department will work to those ends.

### A. Employee Assistance Program

Contingent upon the type and severity of an employee's behavioral problem, the employee may be referred to the City's Employee Assistance Program in accordance with the General Order covering such action.

## VI. EVALUATION OF SYSTEM.

The Personnel Early Warning System will be reviewed and evaluated by the Commander of the Investigations and Support Bureau in August or September of each year. This will generally be accomplished in conjunction with the department's performance evaluation process.

A report will be prepared detailing the number of instances where department intervention in regard to problem employees was required, and an evaluation made as to the effectiveness of the early warning system. Should revisions in the process be needed to make it more effective, they shall be documented and forwarded to the Chief of Police for staff discussion. Following adequate study and reflection, those recommendations that are accepted will be incorporated into the existing order system.

BY ORDER OF:

RICHARD T. MORRIS  
Chief of Police

RTM: dld

CALEA Reference: 35.1.15