

Guidelines for Zero Tolerance Policy

“Eliminating Negativity in the Workplace”

Negativity in the workplace can be caustic. Allowing even a few hardened complainers can infect countless others and spread negativity throughout the organization. It can result in low morale, job dissatisfaction, and if allowed unchecked, can impact resident and family satisfaction, as well. The objective of a Zero Tolerance policy is to provide the management and staff of an organization the tools to identify and correct negative behaviors, and if necessary, take specific steps to eliminate not only the behaviors, but the individuals who consistently fail to abide by the policies mandates.

Recommended steps:

1. Identify specific criteria to aid in the identification of positive, proactive staff members who are respected by their peers and exhibit appropriate behaviors at work.
2. Based on those criteria, select a task force of front line professionals (7 – 12) to assist in the creation, education and implementation of the policy.
3. Provide guidance in overall structure of the policy, but do not “write” the policy for the task force. The role of management is to oversee the process and provide resources to the task force, but not to dictate the specific terms or process.
4. Provide education to task force on appropriate employment law standards so that the policy meets legal and HR related requirements.
5. Provide ample support so that the task force may complete their task.

Sample timeline:

Week 1: Develop criteria and select task force members

Week 2: Assemble task force and lay out guidelines and prospective outcomes

Weeks 3 – 6: Task force gathers regularly to define specifics of policy

Week 7: HR/Management review of proposed policy

Weeks 8 – 10: Task force revisions, as needed

Weeks 11 – 14: Task force develops implementation strategy and training curriculum

Week 15: Task force presents to all staff guidelines of the new policy and timeframes for education and implementation.

Weeks 16 – 20: Task force provides individual departments with preliminary education and discussion of policy and ramifications.

Weeks 21 – 24: Trial implementation of policy – no penalties for infractions, reinforcement of appropriate behaviors

Weeks 25 – 26: Policy review and revision, as needed

Week 27: Presentation of revised policy to all staff. Identification of full implementation date

Week 30: Implementation

Weeks 31 – 40: Observation and modification of policy. (work out the kinks)

Week 41: Finalization and full implementation.