

# Employee Counseling

**Index Code:** 302.4

**Effective Date:** 01/15/10 (Revised 7/12/2022)

---

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to provide supervisory personnel with the authority to impose counseling in response to employee performance or behavioral issues.

## **II. Policy**

It is the policy of the Office of the Sheriff to establish and maintain a system for tracking, reviewing, and responding to employee actions that pose a potential violation to policy and/or law. In addition to punitive actions, counseling can be a helpful tool in assessing employee performance and providing intervention where appropriate.

## **III. General Guidelines**

A. Whenever a complaint is received, whether originating internally or from the community, the Office of the Sheriff will respond, thoroughly investigate the incident, and the Sheriff/Chief Deputy or the County Administrative Charging Committee will determine if any necessary punitive or non-punitive actions are required.

B. Ideally, employee counseling is conducted as soon as possible following the behavior, performance or incident. All counseling sessions will be documented.

C. Counseling may be conducted by any supervisor in the employee's chain of command. When possible, especially in sessions with cross genders, the counseling should be conducted with an unbiased third party as a witness.

D. Counseling may be used for supervisor- initiated correction of observed subordinates' actions. Examples of when counseling may be appropriate include: employee lateness; disruptive comments or behavior; failure to respond to calls promptly; speeding or improper parking in a police vehicle; or other minor infractions that should be pointed out and corrected immediately.

E. Counseling may be used, at the discretion of the employee's commander, Chief Deputy or their designees, for minor infractions when, following the initial inquiry into a complaint from an agency employee, it is determined that the incident did not warrant a formal internal investigation or disciplinary action. Complaints received from members of the public shall be forwarded by the Chief Deputy or designee to the County Police Accountability Board for review and guidance.

F. Employees will be counseled at the conclusion of any rating period to include the results of the performance evaluation just completed and their goals for the next rating period to include advancement possibilities, specialization and future training needs.

G. Counseling may be used to address any poor performance identified during the last rating period, or any performance expected for the next rating period.

H. Formal or informal counseling should be incorporated in annual evaluation scoring to accurately reflect an employee's performance throughout the evaluation period. If personnel counseling is used to close a formal, sustained internal investigation, that or any sustained policy infractions should be noted by the evaluator in that employee's annual personnel evaluation.

## **IV. Procedures**

A. Supervisors may make an initial inquiry by listening to complainants, through personal observation, and/or by listening to other employees, and then determine in consultation with the complainant whether the incident, if true, should be handled through the formal complaint process or

through the use of counseling.

B. If the **formal** complaint originates from a **member of the public**, the supervisor will inform the complainant that the complaint will be documented, investigated fully and the complainant will be notified of the results.

C. During a counseling session, the particular infraction will be discussed by the counselor, pointing out specific deficiencies in the employee's performance, behavior, or attitude. Employees will be given a chance to express their views, verbally and/or in writing, regarding the incident which led to the counseling session, and to develop and recommend corrective measures. If the employee disagrees with the reason for counseling, or the action taken, the employee may document their disagreement. Record of the counseling shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file including existing electronic files to afford the employee the opportunity to view and record their comments.

**V. CALEA References:** 35.1.7a, 35.1.7b & 35.1.7c.

**VI. Proponent Unit:** Administrative Services

**VII. Cancellation:** Index Code 302.4 dated 2/17/2022.

---

Sheriff Gary Hofmann