



Question of the Week

April 30, 2025

Question

Who should be responsible for delivering a disciplinary action in response to performance or attendance issues?

ANSWER

In general, disciplinary actions should be delivered by the employee's manager. It's the manager's job to define what success looks like in the role, set performance and attendance expectations, monitor the employee's work, offer guidance, coaching, and feedback, and administer discipline when needed. Employees also tend to respond better when the person disciplining them is familiar with the work they do.

One exception is when HR has conducted an investigation related to harassment, theft, or another serious issue—in those situations, it generally makes the most sense for HR to also deliver its findings and any associated discipline.

In most cases, HR can play a key supportive role by equipping managers to handle disciplinary actions effectively and consistently, such as:

- Setting company policy with respect to discipline so managers know what level of discipline is appropriate for a given situation
- Training and coaching
- Providing standardized disciplinary forms (e.g., the company's performance improvement plan)
- Reviewing paperwork before it is delivered
- Attending the meeting as a neutral witness (when appropriate)

- Maintaining documentation in the employee files
- Mediating disputes when an employee appeals a disciplinary action

You can learn more about disciplinary actions on the [platform](#).

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.