

Successful Interviewing

Bridget Cease

Henrico County Department of Human Resources

Agenda

- ▶ The Investigation Process
- ▶ What is the purpose of an interview?
- ▶ Who should participate?
- ▶ Preparing for the interview
- ▶ Flow of the interview
- ▶ Control of the interview
- ▶ How to handle unexpected issues?
- ▶ Questions

Investigations...What is their purpose?

- ▶ Investigations are a process to help the investigator determine a certain set of events, participants and outcomes.
- ▶ They are intended to capture information.
- ▶ They are as important for proving non-participation/non-violation, as they are in proving participation/violation of policy
- ▶ They are not based on opinion, morals, or any other non-fact based information.
- ▶ They should be fair, consistent, and unbiased.

Investigation Process

- ▶ Allegation/Complaint
- ▶ Gathering of information and evidence
 - ▶ Documents (timesheets, pictures, work orders, etc.)
 - ▶ Physical pieces of evidence (broken equipment, etc.)
 - ▶ Interviews (involved employees, witnesses, other)
- ▶ Summary of Investigation
 - ▶ Pulling together all the collected information
- ▶ Writing a Report

Interviews...What is their purpose?

- ▶ Interviews are a means to get information directly from people
- ▶ They can provide you clarification to specific questions, or...
- ▶ They can give you an idea of where/from whom you need to gather information

Who Should Participate?

- ▶ The person being interviewed
- ▶ One or two investigators (not more)
- ▶ Attorneys are not generally allowed for administrative investigation interviews
- ▶ Observers/family members/friends are not generally allowed

Preparing for the Interviews

- ▶ Take time to review the complaint/allegation
- ▶ Determine the order for your interviews
- ▶ Determine what you are trying to accomplish with each interview
- ▶ Make notes of things you know you need to learn/questions that need to be asked, etc.
- ▶ Don't read from a script..... An interview should really just be a conversation
- ▶ Determine what your best plan is for each person, and for the subject of your investigation, what if any "hooks" do they have?

Flow of the Interview

- ▶ Greet people.... These are people you know and will usually continue working with, so be professional, yet cordial.
- ▶ Know your process so you feel comfortable (procedural paperwork, where you will start with questions, etc.)
- ▶ Build trust where you can
- ▶ Remember, people give you more information when you are likeable, yet professional
- ▶ Ease into the most important goals of the interview

Flow of the Interview cont.

- ▶ Start with open-ended questions
- ▶ Follow what they provide you
- ▶ Don't leave any rock unturned
- ▶ End by asking them some form of the question, "Is there anything we have talked about or asked you, that you think would be important for us to know?"
- ▶ Ask them if they have any questions..... And answer them if you can
- ▶ Don't make promises you can't keep

Control of the Interview

- ▶ Know where you are headed (If appropriate, ask them if they know why they are being interviewed)
- ▶ Be flexible in your plan
- ▶ Be prepared to be comfortable with silence
- ▶ Don't be afraid to point out to people they have not answered your question, have contradicted themselves, or aren't making sense
- ▶ Don't give them information you don't need to share
- ▶ If necessary, remind them they need to cooperate and participate (if this is true)
- ▶ Maintain a calm, professional, assertive command presence

During the Interview

- ▶ Pay attention to body language
 - ▶ Closed vs open
 - ▶ Changes in behavior
 - ▶ New signs of nervousness or being uncomfortable

During the Interview Cont.

- ▶ Pay attention to details, words and verbiage

During the Interview Cont.

- ▶ Breaks can be helpful... And hurtful
- ▶ You are in control

Handling Unexpected Issues

- ▶ What are unexpected issues?
 - ▶ Refusal to sign procedural paperwork
 - ▶ Refusal to participate
 - ▶ Crying
 - ▶ Telephone usage/requests
 - ▶ Showing-up with someone unannounced
 - ▶ Asking to meet sooner than scheduled interview
 - ▶ Bringing-up someone else's transgressions in an effort to divert attention

Questions???

Contact Information

Bridget Cease

(804) 501-4273

CEA01@Henrico.us