

KNOW YOUR WORKPLACE RESOURCES

ADVICELINE: All Commonwealth employees, including agency managers and human resource professionals, may call the Office of Employment Dispute Resolution's (EDR's) toll-free AdviceLine for confidential, cost-free guidance on preventing, managing and resolving workplace conflict, as well as information on the rights and responsibilities of employees and agency management. Employees can reach EDR's AdviceLine by calling 1-888-23-ADVICE (232-3842) during normal business hours.

MEDIATION: EDR administers the Commonwealth's workplace mediation program. Mediation is a confidential and voluntary process through which neutral third persons (mediators) assist employees in conflict with exploring their differences and developing their own solutions to their concerns. A decision to mediate a dispute does not prevent an employee from initiating a grievance later, but a written agreement to extend the 30-day grievance filing deadline is required to preserve the right to grieve at a future date.

CONFLICT COACHING: EDR's conflict coaching is designed to help an employee better understand the way s/he typically responds to workplace conflict. EDR's conflict coach utilizes either the individual or the 360 Conflict Dynamic Profile assessment tool to identify the employee's most problematic areas. The conflict coach then helps the employee create an action plan outlining goals and setting target dates.

TRAINING: Preventing and resolving conflict at the earliest opportunity and lowest possible level saves agencies both time and money. To that end, the grievance statutes require supervisory personnel to be trained in conflict management and the grievance procedure. EDR offers a variety of training options for agencies to assist with this mandate, including sessions on conflict management, communication skills, best practices in disciplinary actions, and the grievance procedure for all supervisors and employees.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: Non-probationary classified employees may use the Commonwealth's grievance procedure to bring their work-related concerns to upper-level management, and in some cases, to an independent hearing officer. Generally any issue that relates directly to your own employment can be grieved, at least through the management steps in your agency, but rules must be strictly followed. More key points:

- All grievances must be initiated on the Grievance Form A within 30 calendar days of the challenged action, unless the parties agree in writing to an extension.
- State law prohibits retaliation against employees who participate in a grievance.
- Employees and agency management are responsible for knowing their grievance rights and responsibilities.
- Information on the grievance procedure is available from EDR consultants via the toll-free AdviceLine and on EDR's Website, including copies of the *Grievance Procedure Manual* and Grievance Form A.

Department of Human Resource Management Office of Employment Dispute Resolution

Website: www.dhrm.virginia.gov/edr E-mail: edr@dhrm.virginia.gov

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