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| <b>East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District</b>                             |  |                                    |
|  | <b><i>SOG 231 Positive Reinforcement Process</i></b> |                                    |
|   | <b>Implementation Date: 06/1999</b>                  | <b>Revision Date(s): 3/26/2019</b> |
|   |  | <b>Reviewed Date(s): 3/7/2019</b>  |
|   | <b>Forms or Attachments: None</b>                    |                                    |

**231.1 Positive Reinforcement Process**

A. The Department has initiated a Positive Reinforcement policy that is to be followed in conjunction with the Code of Conduct.

East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District has a system of discipline that is easy for the supervisor to administer and the employee to understand. The Department’s Positive Reinforcement program emphasizes correcting the problem rather than punishing the offender (depending on the seriousness of the offense). The Positive Reinforcement program requires the Department’s work rules and performance standards to be easy to understand, easy to enforce, make sense, and be accurately and consistently enforced.

The program will be used primarily with Group 1 and Group 2 offenses, in varying degrees. This in no way excludes its use in Group 3 and 4 offenses, if appropriate.

Positive Reinforcement is an approach to encourage proper performance and to correct poor performance which minimizes the use of punishment. The process is designed to solve problems and encourage good performance by treating the employee as an adult with a problem to solve. A supervisor must gather all the facts regarding the incident and be fully informed prior to initiating any disciplinary action.

**231.2 Commendatory or Corrective Actions**

The commendatory or corrective actions are as follows:

- A+ = Commendation
- 1 = Guidance
- 2 = Counseling
- 3 = Written Reprimand
- 4 = Suspension and/or demotion
- 5 = Decision-Making Leave

6 = Resignation/Termination

As a part of positive reinforcement, it is essential to encourage proper performance through commendation (A+). When an employee has sustained proper performance or has gone above the norm, it should be indicated as such on the Personnel Appraisal Log (~~Form 229-1~~).

The first step of the positive reinforcement process is Guidance. This is an informal conversation between the employee and supervisor in which problems and solutions are discussed. As this first step is very informal, it will not require any form of documentation other than an entry on the Personnel Appraisal Log.

The second step of the process is counseling. The counseling session is used when Guidance has not resulted in the desired change. The employee interview form will be completed.

The third step, Written Reprimand is the beginning of Group 2 Offenses. This is also used when previous Counseling has not accomplished the desired changes. The employee interview form will be completed.

The fourth step, Suspension/Demotion is the beginning of Group 3 Offenses. This is also used when previous Counseling has not accomplished the desired changes. Suspension will be explained in more detail.

The fifth step is Decision Making Leave. This is the most serious step of the Positive Reinforcement process as further infractions would result in termination. Decision Making Leave requires the approval of the Fire Chief or his representative. An employee is given one day off (without pay) to decide if he or she wishes to continue working for the Department. Decision making leave is only given one time.

The final step, Resignation/Termination is self-explanatory.

Repeating steps may often be necessary. This is especially true for Step 1, Guidance and Step 2, Counseling. One reason repetition of steps may be considered could be because the offense is not serious enough to warrant proceeding further.

### 231.3 Inactive Disciplinary Actions

The Department does not remove Personnel Appraisal Logs from personnel files. Supervisors should, however, consider certain interview forms or steps in the Positive Reinforcement Process “inactive” after a period of time and should be repeated when needed. The exception to this would be Decision Making Leave which, under most circumstances, should only be given once. Because they are not removed, employee interview forms are especially useful in identifying patterns of incidents and correcting employee problems through counseling and other employee assistance programs.

The following is a guide for determining the steps of the Positive Reinforcement Process inactive:

|        |          |          |
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| Step 1 | Guidance | 6 months |
|--------|----------|----------|

|        |                       |           |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Step 2 | Counseling            | 9 months  |
| Step 3 | Written Reprimand     | 12 months |
| Step 4 | Suspension/Demotion   | 24 months |
| Step 5 | Decision Making Leave | Permanent |

### **231.4 Suspension**

An employee may be suspended at once by his immediate supervisor for reasons as provided in the Code of Conduct Rules and/or Department Rules. Suspensions will be without pay.

### **231.5 Notification of Right to Appeal**

An employee who has received any disciplinary action shall immediately be advised of his rights to appeal the action by the grievance procedures.