

# Code of Conduct: Can't We All Just Get Along?

January 20, 2012  
MMA Annual Meeting & Trade Show

Applying the Code of Conduct to Conflicts  
among and between Elected Officials,  
Supervisors, Employees, and the Public

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# **“Can’t We Get All Just Get Along”**

Focus on:

- understanding conflict sources, including dynamics and attitudes,
- steps to resolve conflict,
- preventive measures to keep it from reoccurring,

# Elected Officials are more than Politicians

Elected Officials are:

- Leaders
- Department Heads
- Administrators
- Supervisors
- Managers

Elected Officials are considered supervisors under the law with respect to harassment and discrimination

# What is workplace conflict?

A sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas.

What are the costs of workplace conflict?

# What are the Costs of Workplace Conflict?

- increased absenteeism
- increased turnover
- increased stress
- increased costs for employee assistance programs (EAPs)
- Increased workers' compensation claims
- increased risk for accidents / incidents
- decreased productivity and motivation
- lower morale
- reduced image and customer confidence
- poorer customer service
- Increase in complaints, grievances, and lawsuits

# Sources of Conflict

- Poor Communication
- Different Values
- Differing Interests
- Scarce Resources
- Personality Clashes
- Poor Performance

# 7 Steps to Avoid Conflicts

1. Gain Knowledge
2. Avoid Ignorance
3. Be an Effective Administrator and Supervisor
4. Build Positive Meaningful Relationships with Employees
5. Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of conduct Policy
6. Effectively Address Performance Issues
7. Be A Real Leader

# Steps to Avoid Conflicts

## Step One: Gain Knowledge!

- What are your duties and responsibilities?
  - In many cases, an Elected Official's authority is very limited – Do not Abuse!!!!
  - Members of Boards and Committees have no independent authority or power
- Find out what is going on.
- Obtain the 3D's: data, details and documents.
- Don't make assumptions!
- Don't make comments or pronouncements without the facts to back them up!



# Steps to Avoid Conflicts

## Step Two: Avoid Ignorance!

- Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.  
[Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

- There is no darkness but ignorance.  
[William Shakespeare](#)

- The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance.  
[Benjamin Franklin](#)

- Ignorance, the root and stem of all evil.  
[Plato](#)

- People always fear change. People feared electricity when it was invented, didn't they? People feared coal, they feared gas-powered engines... There will always be ignorance, and ignorance leads to fear.  
[Bill Gates](#)

- All I know is just what I read in the papers, and that's an alibi for my ignorance.  
[Will Rogers](#)

- Blinding ignorance does mislead us. O! Wretched mortals, open your eyes!  
[Leonardo da Vinci](#)

# Steps to Avoid Conflicts

## Step Three: Be an Effective Administrator and Supervisor

- Appoint, hire, and promote the best qualified people for the job. Avoid hiring friends, relatives, political supporters
- Set clear and reasonable expectations.
- Hold yourself and employees accountable.

# Steps to Avoid Conflicts

**Step Four:** Build Positive Meaningful Relationships with Employees

Key: Knowing what employees want!

# What do Employees Want?

- Feeling In On Things
- Full Appreciation for Work Done
- Good Wages
- Good Working Conditions
- Interesting Work
- Job Security
- Promotions/Growth Opportunities
- Personal Loyalty to Workers
- Tactful Disciplining
- Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems

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## What Supervisors Thought Employees Wanted Most

1. Good Wages
2. Job Security
3. Promotions/Growth Opportunities
4. Good Working Conditions
5. Interesting Work
6. Personal Loyalty to Workers
7. Tactful Disciplining
8. Full Appreciation for Work Done
9. Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems
10. Feeling In On Things

# What Employees Actually Wanted Most

1. Interesting Work
2. Full Appreciation for Work Done
3. Feeling In On Things
4. Job Security
5. Good Wages
6. Promotions/Growth Opportunities
7. Good Working Conditions
8. Personal Loyalty to Workers
9. Tactful Disciplining
10. Sympathetic Help with Personal Problems

# What can Elected Officials, Department Heads, and Supervisors control?

- 1. Interesting Work**
- 2. Full Appreciation for Work Done**
- 3. Feeling In On Things**

# Steps to Avoid Conflict

## Step 5: Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of Conduct Policy

**Eliminate workplace conflict by implementing a policy of mutual respect**

**Prohibits conduct that would be construed as:**

- Inappropriate
- Offensive
- Rude
- Disrespectful
- Bullying
- Intimidating



# Steps to Avoid Conflict

## Step 5: Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of Conduct Policy

- Covers any inappropriate and offensive conduct that may not amount to Harassment and Discrimination
- Strictly Enforce in a Consistent Manner
- **Applicable to All Personnel: Elected Officials, Supervisors and Employees**
- **Distribute Annually to Everyone – Sign Acknowledgement Form**

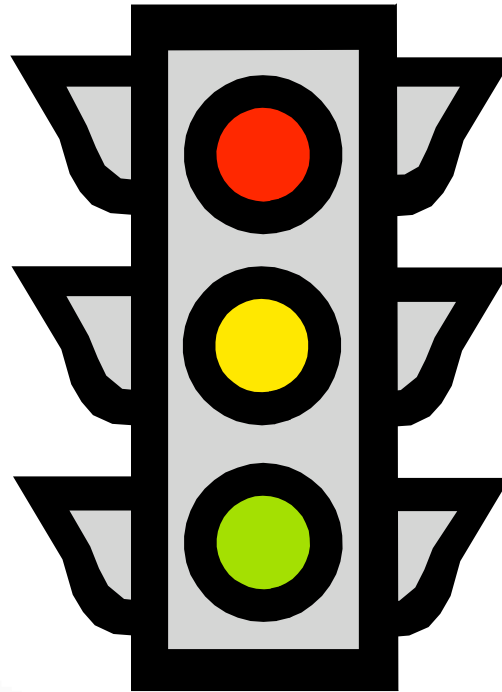
## Step 5: Adopt, Implement, and Enforce a Code of Conduct Policy

Examples of “offensive” conduct that may violate the “Code of Conduct” policy:

- Unwarranted or invalid criticism
- Gossiping or spreading rumors
- Blaming without factual justification
- Treating an employee differently than the rest of the work group
- Use of profanity
- Exclusion or social isolation
- Shouting or humiliating
- Playing practical jokes or making the employee the butt of jokes
- Off-premises conduct
- No feedback on work performance
- Ostracizing
- Excessive monitoring

# Effectively Implementing and Enforcing a Code of Conduct Policy:

**First: Use the TRAFFIC LIGHT!**



# Effectively Implementing and Enforcing a Code of Conduct Policy:

## Second: Apply the “Reasonable Person Perspective!”

- The Intentions of the Alleged Wrongdoer do not Count!
- Look at from the perspective of the message receiver!

# Steps to Avoid Conflict

## Step 6: Effectively Address Performance Issues

### Positive/Effective

- **Collaboration:** working together to find a mutually beneficial solution.
- **Compromise:** finding a middle ground.

### Negative/Harmful

- **Avoidance**
- **Competing**
- **Accommodating:** Surrendering our own needs and wishes to please the other person.

# Steps to Avoid Conflict

## Step 6 Effectively Address Performance Issues

If Conflict related to an **Employee's Performance**, use **SMART** Guidelines:

**Specific**, clear, and observable facts regarding the employee's failure to meet job standards should be discussed and documented.

**Mutual goals** should be developed and agreed to by the manager and the employee to address performance deficiencies and to help the employee meet and/or exceed job expectations.

**Actions** that will need to be taken if the employee continues to fail to meet job expectations should be established.

**Review** and discuss any concerns and suggestions made by the employee regarding the ability and resources needed to improve performance and meet job expectations.

**Time frames** should be established for improved performance and status checks.

# Steps to Avoid Conflict

## Step 7: Be A Real Leader

**Walk the Walk!**

**Talk the Talk!**

**Lead by Example!**

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