

Pre-Disciplinary Interview (PDI)

The purpose of this article will be to try and clarify some typical questions which arise from and procedures that govern a proper PDI.

First, please do not confuse PDI with an official discussion. The contract, under Article 16 (the discipline procedure) still requires management to give an official discussion, for minor offenses, prior to issuing discipline. You do not have the right to union representation for an official discussion.

An official discussion is not considered to be discipline. The supervisor must tell you that he/she is giving you an official discussion; he/she must be specific as to what offense the official discussion is for, and it must be given in private.

Discussions are not grievable, but you have the right to make notes during the discussion. It is very important that you record the date and specific content of the discussion, including the name of the supervisor. This information could be very important in the event that management does issue you progressive discipline based upon this official discussion in the future.

Now to the PDI. Management is required to offer you a PDI before issuing each and every step of progressive discipline. In other words, for minor offenses, this is the procedure that is supposed to take place in the course of issuing progressive discipline; 1) Official Discussion; 2) PDI; 3) Letter of Warning; 4) PDI; 5) Seven Calendar Day Suspension; 6) PDI; 7) Fourteen Calendar Day Suspension; 8) PDI; 9) Removal (Management could issue another suspension prior to Removal, but this rarely occurs, and there is no requirement to do so).

Please bear in mind that any PDI is optional on the part of the craft employee. It is considered to be your "day in court". Be assured that when you are offered a PDI by your supervisor, he/she is absolutely considering issuing you discipline. The PDI is supposed to afford you the opportunity to offer any evidence and/or mitigating factors involved in the events surrounding the circumstances which lead to the PDI.

You must ask for and are entitled to union representation at any PDI. Management will not always **offer** you representation, and they are not required to.

In some instances in the past, some supervisors have actually issued employees discipline for not showing up for a PDI. Needless to say, this discipline was wiped out because you do not have to attend a PDI. It is optional for you.

In my opinion, you should attend a PDI when offered because you have nothing to lose and possibly something to gain.

As I stated earlier a PDI is your "day in court" to explain to your supervisor why he/she should not issue discipline to you. You don't discuss contractual aspects of the discipline procedure. That is up to your steward if and when discipline is issued. We don't want to tip-our hand to management too early on in the process. You do discuss anything you choose to discuss which you believe could mitigate management's reason for issuing discipline.

The biggest reason I encourage you to attend a PDI is really simple. In many cases your supervisor does not know what the real purpose of a PDI is. Hell, some of them believe attendance at a PDI is mandatory, which simply is not true. Some supervisors think it is an opportunity for them to berate you. It is not. This is your forum - not theirs.

If at any point of the PDI you become uncomfortable with things, you can terminate the PDI, however, I would suggest that you consult with your steward prior to doing so.

A PDI is not supposed to be just another hollow step in the discipline procedure. Many supervisors walk into a PDI with their minds already made up to issue you discipline. That is not supposed to be the case. Management is supposed to listen to what you have to say and consider it prior to issuing the discipline to you.

The most important thing for you to do is to immediately request union representation prior to attending the PDI. If management does not provide you with union representation, it constitutes a fatal flaw and the discipline will fall.

There are many subtleties involved in this process which time and space preclude me from addressing here. It is my hope that this article contains enough general information to assist you in the event that management invites you to attend a PDI.

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