

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH THREATS TO A SUPERVISOR (OR ANOTHER EMPLOYEE)

In the event an employee threatens a supervisor (or another employee), the supervisor should immediately conduct a meeting with the supervisor, employee, and, as witnesses, the union steward and another supervisor. The supervisor should keep the meeting short and to the point and should not ask any questions, but instead should only act as follows:

- ___ Review the incident in detail and state exactly what the employee said or how he/she gestured in making the threat. It is not necessary that the employee verifies any of the incident or any words used.
- ___ Warn the employee that any future threats or carrying out of such threats will not be tolerated and will lead to severe disciplinary action including termination of employment and, most likely, prosecution.
- ___ Present the employee with at least a verbal warning and place it on the record, but a written warning or a written reprimand is highly recommended. (The employee can be informed that a written letter is being prepared and will be given to him/her later and placed in his/her personnel file.)
- ___ Do not permit lengthy discussion in the meeting, and inform the steward that he/she is there as a witness only.
- ___ Inform the employee that he/she may pursue any point of disagreement through the grievance procedure, but that the meeting is not a fact-finding meeting, a discussion meeting, or a grievance meeting. Identify the meeting as a warning meeting.
- ___ End the meeting and document the incident and the meeting.

IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, when the actual threat is made, on the spot, at the time, the supervisor should ask the employee, "What is the reason for that threat?" or "Why are you doing this?" If circumstances do not permit these questions, it may be prudent to ask it in the warning meeting, but only after the first three items above have been carried out.

For the mere act of name-calling, before taking any action against the employee, the supervisor should first of all instruct the employee to stop using abusive language (non-threatening language) and should warn the employee that continuation of the use of abusive language will result in discipline. Then the supervisor should consider the following:

Whatever the supervisor was called, did the supervisor prior to that time use the same or a similar term toward the employee? Secondly, what was the supervisor's conduct, and did it aggravate or provoke the employee to use that kind of language? Thirdly, did the supervisor call the employee anything at all that could have provoked that type of comment from the employee? Any such action by the supervisor would likely be sufficient to mitigate the employee's action and could be deemed to have aggravated or caused the employee response.

NOTE: If additional supervisory witnesses observed the threat, or if a threatening gesture or brandishing of a weapon was involved, it is appropriate to give the employee, at least, a written reprimand or a more severe action.