**Problem Resolution and Peer Review Policy**

 **Purpose**

[Company Name] is committed to providing favorable working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment involves encouraging an open and honest atmosphere in which employee concerns and complaints receive a timely response.

**Problem Resolution**

If [Company Name] employees disagree with the implementation or enforcement of established rules of conduct, policies or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint in a reasonable, business-like manner or for using the problem resolution procedure.

***Procedure***

If a situation occurs in which an employee believes that a condition of employment or a decision affecting him or her is unjust or inequitable, the employee is encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the process at any step.

* The employee may present the problem to his or her immediate supervisor within 10 calendar days after it occurs. If the supervisor is unavailable to address the problem, or if the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact his or her immediate supervisor, the employee may present the problem to the human resource (HR) manager or to any other member of management, including the president of [Company Name].
* The supervisor will discuss the situation with the employee within 10 calendar days after the employee brings the problem to the supervisor. The supervisor must document the discussion.
* The employee may present the problem to the HR manager within 10 calendar days after discussing it with his or her supervisor, if the employee believes that the problem is unresolved.
* The HR manager should counsel the employee, assisting him or her in putting the problem in writing and meeting with the employee’s manager(s), if necessary.
* If the employee’s problem relates to a termination, suspension or disciplinary decision, the HR manager should direct the employee to the peer review panel for a review and resolution of the problem. If the problem relates to any other matter, the employee can take his or her complaint to the president of [Company Name].
* The employee may present the problem to the peer review panel in accordance with the peer review procedures described below.

**Peer Review**

[Company Name]’s peer review panel is the final and binding [Company Name] authority on disputes that are brought before it.

***Purpose and authority of the peer review panel***

The purpose of peer review is to provide employees, in cases of discipline, suspension and termination, with the opportunity to have these actions reviewed by a panel of their peers. In such cases, peer review panels have the authority to determine whether an existing policy or procedure was properly and fairly applied in a given situation and to render a final and binding decision that can affirm, reverse or modify management decisions.

The panel does not have the authority to change [Company Name] policies, pay rates, benefits or work rules.

***Eligibility to use the peer review program***

All regular employees below the manager level are eligible. [Company Name]’s temporary and contract workers are not eligible to participate in the peer review program.

***Eligibility to serve on the panel***

To be eligible to serve on a [Company Name] peer review panel, an employee or manager must have:

* Volunteered to participate on the peer review panel.
* Completed one year of continuous service with [Company Name].
* Completed the peer review panel training program.

***Peer review procedure***

The peer review process operates as follows:

* The peer review panel consists of five individuals who are selected at random from a pool of [Company Name] employees and a separate pool of [Company Name] managers who have completed peer review training. Four employees and one member of management will be selected for the panel.
	+ The panel members should name a chairperson before the peer review hearing occurs. The chairperson cannot be a member of management.
	+ Members of the employee’s family or a person in the employee’s chain of command may not serve on the panel hearing the employee’s complaint.
	+ An employee who is selected to serve as a panelist should disqualify himself or herself if the employee believes for any reason that he or she cannot be impartial in reviewing the case. The company may also disqualify a panelist if it believes the panelist cannot be impartial in reviewing the case.
	+ If a panelist is disqualified or is unwilling to serve, the employer should randomly select a new panelist from the appropriate panelist pool.
	+ The HR manager will convene the panel and will obtain the relevant documents for the panel to review.
* Peer review panelists must keep all matters that come before the panel confidential. Panelists may not discuss with anyone other than panel members or the HR manager any matter that comes before the panel. A breach of this provision will result in removal of the panelist from the pool of eligible panelists and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
* Peer review panel hearings will occur according to the following procedures:
	+ The panel should hold the peer review hearing within five working days of the employee’s appeal to the panel.
	+ At the hearing, the employee will present his or her complaint first. The employee’s immediate supervisor will then make a presentation in response to the employee’s complaint. After both presentations have been made, the panel will determine if further investigation is necessary for it to reach a decision.
	+ Neither [Company Name]’s representatives nor the employee may be represented by an attorney at the peer review panel hearing.
	+ Witnesses may be called by the complaining employee, by the supervisor or by any member of the panel. An HR representative may provide the peer review panel with other information relevant to the complaint, including information on [Company Name]’s past practices and decisions in similar situations.
	+ The panel will render a decision within five working days of the hearing. Decisions will be made by secret ballot, and the peer review panel will be required to deliberate until they reach a majority decision.
	+ The panel chairperson should complete a hearing result form and deliver it to the HR manager. The HR manager will communicate the panel’s decision to the employee and the employee’s supervisor in writing.
	+ The panel’s decision is final and binding on all parties.