Complaint Investigation Procedure

Prompt Investigation

Begin an investigation once you have received a complaint or otherwise been made aware that wrongdoing may have occurred.

Document all steps of the investigation, including interviews, discipline, and incident follow up.

Select the Investigator

An internal investigator will be appointed by the Chair of the Governance Committee. The investigator should have experience and knowledge of relevant employment laws and be objective and unbiased. Strong interpersonal skills and attentiveness to detail are also preferable qualities.

A member of the MNF management team should attend the investigations to act as a witness and take notes.

A third-party investigator should be appointed if the alleged perpetrator is a high-ranking employee or you are unable to identify a neutral internal investigator.

Complainant Interview

Always conduct investigation meetings in a private location.

Ask open ended and non-leading questions:

- Who is/are the alleged perpetrator(s)?
- When and where did the incident(s) occur? Be specific – find out dates and times.
- Are you aware of other employees that may have experienced a similar situation(s)?
- Are you aware of a specific reason for the hostility?
- How were you and your work affected by the situation?
- Did you discuss the incident with anyone else?
- What is your desired result from this investigation?

Consider the situation and ask additional questions, such as:

- Were there witnesses?
- Is there any other evidence of the incident (e.g., video)?
- Is there any other information that you believe to be relevant to the investigation?

Obtain written statements from the complainant and other witnesses if possible

Inform the complainant that retaliation against them for reporting will not be tolerated and that you will follow up after the investigation.

Instruct the complainant to come to management or the designated investigator if anything new occurs related to the investigation.

Assess whether measures need to be taken to separate the complainant from the alleged perpetrator during the investigatory process (e.g., schedule change, transfer, or leave of absence).

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Alleged Perpetrator Interview

Inform the alleged perpetrator of the claim and give them an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Be as specific as necessary.

Be fair and impartial – reserve judgement until you have heard their side of the story.

Listen and document carefully.

Ask if there are any witnesses to substantiate their position.

Remind them that the organization does not tolerate any type of retaliation, such as mistreatment of the complainant.

Complaint Resolution

Interview witnesses to the allegations, if any.

Determine employees' credibility and whether there is any supporting evidence when there are differing accounts or conflicting versions.

Review documentation of previous employee behavior and incidents.

Determine whether a company policy was violated and, if so, who violated it.

Maintain good records of everything done during the investigation as well as the findings and follow up conversations or disciplinary actions.

Determine if the work environment is safe. Consider offering the complainant access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if available and applicable.

Follow Up

Follow-up with complainant, accusers, witnesses, and any others who need to know the outcome.

Apply appropriate disciplinary action as necessary.

Determine whether training or education would be beneficial for an individual employee or all employees.

Determine whether any modifications need to be made to existing policies and redistribute as needed.

Continue to monitor the situation.

Follow up with the complainant to ensure that retaliation is not occurring.