

Coast FM Procedures for Disciplinary Action and Dismissal of Volunteers

Introduction

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to Coast FM and our primary aim is to encourage and support their contribution to the station. However it is also recognised that there may be times when a volunteer needs to be counselled, disciplined and perhaps dismissed.

Coast FM undertakes to handle such situations in the utmost professional manner, ensuring communication between the station and the volunteer is clear, fair, objective and remains within the policy outlined below.

Further, the committee of management will reflect on its own operation and the station's as a whole and consider, in the instance of disciplinary measures or dismissal, the circumstances surrounding the behaviour which lead to this action. The following questions will guide this process:

- Have the roles, values and expectations of the organisation been clearly communicated to the volunteer and subsequently reinforced during prior conversations regarding the volunteer's performance?
- Are there any other factors that may be contributing to the volunteer's poor performance e.g. learning difficulties or language barriers?
- Has the volunteer been reminded of expected codes of conduct and consequences for breaches?
- Has the volunteer received training / mentoring and or coaching to improve performance?
- Has a verbal and written warning been given to the volunteer explaining that any further non-compliance will result in termination of the volunteering opportunity?
- Did the volunteer have the opportunity to respond to prior verbal and written warnings?

Purpose

This document outlines the process for disciplinary measures and dismissal procedures. It aims to provide a clear and fair structure for this process which is easy to follow and understandable to both management and volunteers.

This policy includes an appeals mechanism to ensure a 'right of reply' to a volunteer who has been disciplined. This is further complemented by Coast FM Grievance and Dispute Resolution policy and procedure, which may be used a situation where a volunteer feels they have not been fairly heard or that the Grounds and Procedures for Disciplinary Action and Dismissal of Volunteers has not been adequately followed.

This document does not include the procedure for expulsion of a member from the association. This process is laid out in the constitution of Coastal FM Inc.

Policy

1. The process for disciplinary action is a three step process which includes
 - a. First formal notice in writing
 - b. Second formal notice in writing
 - c. Notice of dismissal of the volunteer from duties
2. For issues that are considered minor a conversation with the volunteer may be appropriate; however this will not be considered part of the formal disciplinary action (although it may be referred to in later action.)
3. Written notice will include details of the issue and, where feasible, evidence. In a case where the disciplinary measure has been instigated by a complaint, it may be appropriate to include a copy (with identification removed) or extract of this complaint.
4. Further disciplinary actions, such as a suspension of volunteer duties for a period of time, may also be deemed appropriate. In such cases these actions will be included with the formal notice in writing.
5. Every effort will be taken to ensure that notice of a disciplinary measure, whether formal or informal, will be given at an appropriate time, eg: not immediately prior to, or during a broadcast
6. Notice of a disciplinary measure will be given by an designated [staff / board member]
7. Volunteers will also be provided an appeal against the action. This may take the form of a meeting with the appropriate staff or board member, or a representation in person and/or in writing to the board of management.
8. The volunteer may bring a representative to any such meeting if they choose
9. Should this appeal result in a change in the disciplinary action, or removal of it, this will be confirmed in writing to the volunteer.
10. Conduct which may lead to disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Poor timekeeping and unreliability
 - b. Not following pre-existing station rules and policies, including programming policies and program briefs.
 - c. Engaging in acts or broadcasts which may breach the Community Radio Codes of Practice.

- d. Engaging in broadcasts which may breach other related legislation such as the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (which includes sponsorship provisions), copyright or defamation.
 - e. Inappropriate handling or use of station equipment or other property
 - f. Rudeness or hostility towards other volunteers or staff members
 - g. Intoxication through alcohol or other substances during working hours
 - h. Publicly bringing Coast FM into disrepute
2. Some conduct may be tantamount to ‘gross misconduct’, in this instance a volunteer may be dismissed without prior warning
 3. Conduct which may be classed as gross misconduct may include, but is not restricted to:
 - a. Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteer, employee, member or guest of [Station Name], particularly in respect of race, sex or religion
 - b. Will full damage to or theft of property belonging to Coast FM or other volunteer, employee, member or guest of Coast FM
 - c. Falsifications of any of the organisation records for personal gain
 - d. Commercial misrepresentation of Coast FM
 4. In a case of a volunteer being dismissed without prior warnings the volunteer will be provided an appeal as outlined in point 7

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