

11—61.1 (8A) Grievances. The grievance procedure is an informal process. It is not a contested case. All employees shall have the right to file grievances. The right to file a grievance and the grievance procedure provided for in these rules shall be made known and available to employees throughout the agency by the appointing authority through well-publicized means. Employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement may use this grievance procedure for issues that are not covered by their respective collective bargaining agreements.

Grievances shall state the issues involved, the relief sought, the date the incident or violation took place and any rules involved and shall be filed on forms prescribed by the director. Grievances involving suspension, reduction in pay within the same pay grade, disciplinary demotion, or discharge may be filed as appeals in accordance with subrule 61.2(6) and commence with Step 3 of the grievance procedure described in subrule 61.1(1).

61.1(1) *Grievance procedure.*

a. Step 1. The grievant shall initiate the grievance by submitting it in writing to the immediate supervisor, or to a supervisor designated by the appointing authority, within 14 calendar days following the day the grievant first became aware of, or should have through the exercise of reasonable diligence become aware of, the grievance issue. The immediate supervisor shall, within seven calendar days after the day the grievance is received, attempt to resolve the grievance within the bounds of these rules and give a decision in writing to the grievant with a copy to the director.

b. Step 2. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision obtained at the first step, the grievant may, within seven calendar days after the day the written decision at the first step is received or should have been received, file the grievance in writing with the appointing authority. The appointing authority shall, within seven calendar days after the day the grievance is received, attempt to resolve the grievance within the bounds of these rules, by affirming, modifying, or reversing the decision made at the first step, or otherwise grant appropriate relief. The decision shall be given to the grievant in writing with a copy to the director.

c. Step 3. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision obtained at the second step, the grievant may, within 7 calendar days after the day the written decision at the second step was received, or should have been received, file the grievance in writing with the director. The director shall, within 30 calendar days after the day the grievance is received, attempt to resolve the grievance and send a decision in writing to the grievant with a copy to the appointing authority. The director may affirm, modify, or reverse the decision made at the second step or otherwise grant appropriate relief. If the relief sought by the grievant is not granted, the director's response shall inform the grievant of the appeal rights in subrule 61.2(5).

d. If the grievant is not satisfied with the decision obtained from the third step the grievant may file an appeal in accordance with subrule 61.2(5).

61.1(2) *Exceptions to time limits.*

a. If the grievant fails to proceed to the next available step in the grievance procedure within the prescribed time limits, the grievant shall have waived any right to proceed further in the grievance procedure and the grievance shall be considered settled.

b. If any management representative fails to comply with the prescribed time limits at any step in the grievance procedure, the grievant may proceed to the next available step.

c. The maximum time periods at any of the three steps in the grievance procedure may be extended when mutually agreed to in writing by both parties.

61.1(3) *Group grievances.* When the appointing authority or the director determines that two or more grievances or grievants address the same or similar issues, they shall be processed and decided as a group grievance.

61.1(4) *Grievance meetings.*

a. When it is determined by a designated management representative or the director that a meeting with the grievant will be held, all reasonable attempts will be made to hold the meeting during the grievant's regularly scheduled hours of work.

b. The grievant may be represented at a grievance meeting by an employee of the grievant's choosing except where that would constitute a conflict of interest. A grievant who wishes to be represented and whose class is covered by a collective bargaining agreement may only be represented by an appointed or elected union representative from the same employee organization as the grievant. A grievant who wishes to be represented and whose class is not covered by a collective bargaining agreement may only be represented by an employee with the same bargaining status as the grievant.

c. The grievant, an employee who is the grievant's representative, and employees authorized to attend the grievance meeting by the appointing authority or the director shall be in paid status for that time spent at and traveling to and from the grievance meeting during their regularly scheduled hours of work. In addition, employees shall, if eligible for overtime compensation, be in paid status for that time spent at and traveling to and from the grievance meeting outside of their regularly scheduled hours of work.

d. The appointing authority shall not authorize mileage, or the use of a state vehicle for employees to attend or participate in a grievance meeting, except for those employees who are required to attend or participate in the meeting by the appointing authority or the director. In the case of group grievances, only one of the grievants shall be in paid status.

61.1(5) *Bypassing steps for discrimination grievances.* A grievance step may be bypassed by the grievant when the grievance alleges discrimination and the respondent at the step is the person against whom the grievance has been filed.

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