

GRIEVANCE PREPARATION: POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. **Arrange to meet with the grievant for a preparation session**
 - 1) Go over the incident giving rise to the grievance to make sure you have all the key points.
 - 2) Advise the grievant that you, as the steward, will be the presenter.
 - 3) Plan the grievant's role in the meeting. Coach the grievant about demeanor during the meeting and discuss what the grievant will say.
 - 4) Prepare the grievant for potential comments/statements from the supervisor.
 - 5) Let the grievant know the hearing officer may have additional questions. Determine ahead of time how you and the grievant will handle.

2. **Determine the contract violations.** Always argue just cause on **discipline** grievances as well as other articles that may apply. For example, if an employee is disciplined for sick leave abuse, you might also want to cite the sick leave article, leave article, review FMLA and consider if the individual has any protections under ADA. For **language** grievances, consult ahead of time with the Chief Steward and/or Staff Representative to be aware of practice and history.

3. **Develop your argument.** You need to know what you are arguing before you can determine the information you might need to support your position. Remember, your job is to explain how the contract was violated.
4. **Anticipate the Employer's argument.** This may help you think on your feet during the meeting.
5. **Investigate and don't procrastinate.** Proper investigation should be done at the first step and not one day before the grievance meeting is scheduled. You might need to interview co-workers and you want to make sure they will be available. You may need to request information from management and it might take some time to compile it.
6. **Complete the checklists provided in your Steward Manual.** Also review the handout on what information you have a right to request. On discipline grievances, always get a copy of the employee's file and copies of any investigation notes.
7. **Complete the information fact sheet provided in your Steward Manual.** The staff representative will require this at third step but it is better to start it before you present at first step, as it will help you develop your argument.
8. **Make copies of all documents that you will refer to.** Make enough copies for all parties at the grievance meeting.
9. **Develop a system.** Make a file on every issue you are working on and keep records of all conversations and contacts with the grievant and management. You can use the grievance contact sheet or develop your own logging system.